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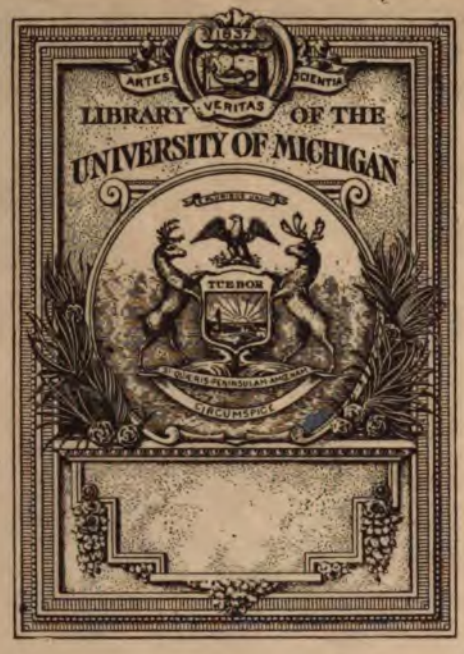
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The Memoirs of
A Balkan Diplomatist

COUNT CHEDOMILLE MIJATOVICH

The Memoirs of a Balkan Diplomatist

By

Count Chedomille Mijatovich

[illegible] Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Ambassador-Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Courts of St. James's, Constantinople, Bucharest, and The Hague

With four illustrations in Photogravure

Cassell and Company, Ltd
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne
1917

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To

GERTRUDE FLORENCE WILDE

IN GRATITUDE

FOR HER FRIENDSHIP

PREFACE

PERHAPS I ought to explain to the reader what induced me to write these Memoirs and what is their leading purpose.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the historical stage of Europe was principally occupied by the so-called Eastern Question. That problem led to the Crimean War (1854-1856), to the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), and to the Balkan War (1912-1913). The danger of the situation was deepened and aggravated by the permanent conflict of Austrian and Russian interests in the Balkans and by the bold endeavour of Germany to give the Eastern Question an issue favourable exclusively to German political, industrial, and commercial concerns. The Balkan interests of Austria-Hungary and the Eastern designs of Germany determined these two Powers to astound Europe by plunging it into the most terrible war in the history of the world. I have no doubt that when the time arrives a truthful history of this great—and as I hope the last—war in Europe will be written, and proofs be forthcoming that this was really an Eastern-Question war, provoked by that question, and having its final solution for its object. Naturally, when the Pandora box of the Eastern Question was opened other local, national and world interests flew forth, calling for an equitable and therefore healthy and definite settlement.

Preface

Of course, such a history as I have hinted at cannot be written now. But there is no reason why contributions for the better understanding of the events and facts which preceded the war and gradually led up to it should not be presented. As from 1869 to 1903 I had been serving my own country, Serbia, as diplomatist and often as Cabinet Minister, and had opportunities of witnessing the never-ending struggle between Russia and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, as well as the conflict of Serbian and Bulgarian interests in Macedonia, I thought I could give some authentic and impartial contributions to the historical study of the antecedent circumstances which finally developed into war. I could, at any rate, supply authentic information of the political events in the Balkans, in which I, personally, had to act more or less important *rôles*, and I could sketch the political and psychological pictures of far more important actors on the political stage of the Balkans whom I have known intimately.

Before I became a diplomatist I was a historian, and in writing this book my only ambition has been to relate the facts impartially. Indeed, I consider that to be simply my duty.

As I went to the United States of America and to Canada in 1916 to show to their people why the Serbs deserve the sympathy and support of every civilised and liberty-loving nation, I have added chapters on my American and Canadian impressions. With all the Serbs I thank God that He moved the great American nation to rise up to help the cause of justice and liberty and to assist in winning for all the nations of the world a lasting peace.

Nevertheless, though the War bulks largely in all

minds, it occupies but a comparatively small space in these pages. Really, as a glance at the contents will show, my book aims at rendering an account of the more public side of my career. Virtually, that is to say, it is my autobiography. It has been my privilege and sometimes, alas! my misfortune, to see many men and many things, and my hope is that the record may prove of general interest. It has been my endeavour to speak of myself as I am, to extenuate nothing and to set down naught in malice.

To turn for a moment to a detail, in the introductory chapter I have called the monastery in which lies the embalmed body of Tsar Lazar by the name of "Ravanitsa," while in Chapter XV. I call it "Vrdnik." I wish to explain that the correct official name of the monastery was and is "Vrdnik," but the people gave it the popular name of "Ravanitsa," in commemoration of the church Ravanitsa which Tsar Lazar built in the centre of the Morava Valley, and in which he expressly wished to be buried. In the introductory chapter I have used the popular name by which my mother called the monastery, and in Chapter XV., acting officially, I have used the official name.

CH. M.

MAY, 1917.
LONDON.

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Memoirs of a Balkan Diplomatist

INTRODUCTION

My Mother

IN these Memoirs I wish to speak of myself as little as possible. I dare say indulgent readers would find no fault with me if I were, in this introductory chapter, to introduce myself to them. But instead of doing so I wish to introduce my mother. Not only because she is my mother, not only because, entering on an important and responsible work, I, as a grateful son, wish to offer public homage to her before I pay it to any other woman, but because she is really an interesting and typical Serb woman with all the strong and weak points of her race. Those who have the patience to read this pen-sketch of my mother will be able afterwards to understand my own activity and my character more easily. Indeed, excepting the love of books, which I inherited from my father, every other feature of my personality and character—my faith in God and God's Providence, my pity for all who suffer, my wish to help everybody, my love for everything that is beautiful, my adoration of chivalry, my love of music, singing and poetry, my fearlessness in speaking the truth, and several of my weaknesses—all these I inherited from my mother.

She was the great-granddaughter of a Serbian, Gabriel Ilich by name, who was commander of a regiment of

Serbian volunteers and who joined the Austrian Army under Prince Eugene of Savoy at the siege of Belgrade in 1717. When the fortress was stormed her great-grandfather was the first to enter at the head of his men, carrying in his right hand no other weapon than an old mace. For that act of bravery and his other services the Queen of Hungary, the Empress Maria Theresa, on the proposal of Prince Eugene, gave him a charter of nobility, with a beautiful coat-of-arms in the Serbian national tricolour: red, blue, and white—a blue shield, crossed by a silver bar, with a red mace on it. I have the original charter still. Its text states that the rank of nobility is inheritable by the members of the family: "Utriusque Sexus."

Our ancestor seems to have possessed artistic instincts and a romantic disposition which were transmitted, somewhat intensified, to his great-granddaughter. The conqueror of the Turks at Belgrade, the new Hungarian nobleman, was himself conquered by a young Andalusian peasant girl. It occurred thus. The Empress Maria Theresa, wishing to introduce "silk-wool" sheep into Hungary, brought from Andalusia the peasants of two villages with all their families and their silk-wool sheep, and settled them in Southern Hungary. Our great-great-grandfather saw a young girl amongst these immigrants, and, after some romantic efforts, succeeded in marrying her.

My mother, with her dark eyes and black hair, her remarkably small hands and feet, and her inclination to a rounded figure, looked very Spanish, especially in her later years. She was born in 1826 in Becskerek, a Serbian town in Southern Hungary. She was given the double name (a very rare custom among the Serbs) of

her Andalusian great-grandmother, Rachel Christina. As a child she was called Tina, and we, her children, knew her only under this name, although her brothers and sisters preferred to call her Rakeela, which is Serbian for Rachel.

She was a very pretty child, liked by everybody for her intelligence and sweet temper. When, in her sixth year, she was standing one day in front of her parents' house, watching a number of carriages returning with merry people from the fair held that day in the town, suddenly a simple covered carriage with two horses stopped before her house, and an old woman from inside the vehicle called to her: "Come, my pretty child; come to me! I wish to give you some nice cakes!" The moment she entered the carriage the old woman ordered the driver to drive away at a gallop. She took the child to her own home in Arad, a town at some distance from Becskerek. The old woman was a Wallachian by nationality, and a magician (*vrachara* in Serbian meaning "medicine woman") by profession. Wallachia and Southern Hungary are even in these days known as countries where one can meet powerful professional magicians. Those countries, together with Transylvania, in old times formed Dacia; and the Dacians are said to have fought the invading Roman legions by magic.

It seems that in order to produce effective results at performances of magic it was necessary that the action of an old woman magician should be assisted by an innocent girl as young as possible. Therefore the old woman had kidnapped Tina at the gates of her parents' courtyard. At that time there were no telegraphs and no proper police organisation, and my

mother's family searched in vain for her for fully six years. At last they discovered her and took her to Kraguyevats, in Serbia, where her elder brother was private chemist to the Prince of Serbia, Milosh Obrenovich, and where she was, in a couple of years, to meet her predestined husband.

My father was a Serbian from Frushka Gora ("mountain of the Frugi") in Syrmia, famous for the number of its Serbian monasteries. His father sent him to study at the Hungarian Universities. He was the greatest Latin scholar amongst contemporary Serbs in Hungary, and became a solicitor as well as assistant editor of the first Serbian paper in Budapest. One evening at an inn he heard a young Magyar nobleman boast about his latest triumph over a poor, innocent girl. Indignant, he told the Magyar that his conduct was mean, that no man had a right to boast over such triumphs; and, although he did not know the girl, he provoked the braggart Magyar to a duel with swords. He was nearly killed in the encounter, and, badly wounded, had to return to Frushka Gora. His nurse was a cousin whom I knew as a still beautiful old woman, and who must have been remarkably beautiful when young. I do not wonder that my father fell in love with her; but as, according to the Orthodox Canon Law, he could not marry her, melancholy and despair seized him and, when he recovered, he went to Ravanitsa, a monastery of Frushka Gora, with the intention of entering holy orders. But the pretty cousin went to the monastery with his mother, and those two women prevailed on him to leave and go to Serbia, which at that time was in need of young professors for middle schools. He went to Serbia, saw Tina Ilich,

the younger sister of the Court chemist, and married her straightway, although she was then only in her fifteenth year.

She had not quite finished her sixteenth year when I was born. When she reached her thirty-first year, in the full bloom of her beauty, I was already a young gentleman of fifteen, accompanying my mother on all her visits to friends or on her errands to the shops. I remember how everybody admired her beauty, enhanced by the picturesque national attire of gold-embroidered black velvet waistcoat, with a Venetian red silk dress, and a red fez embroidered with imitation pearls. Everybody seemed to wonder that such a young woman should have already such a grown-up son!

Besides teaching me to pray to God, the Virgin Mary, and our patron saint, John the Baptist, and to sing with her many popular songs, she used to tell me stories about the time when she lived with the old Wallachian *vrachara* as her apprentice in Arad. I knew my mother would not invent these tales; yet for me, who had just entered the course of natural sciences and philosophy in the Belgrade Lyceum, they were hard to explain. Since then I have found that many of those stories could be explained by hypnotism or auto-suggestion. I will, however, relate two or three of them which could hardly be explained on such a hypothesis.

1. "Marian and Marushka." A Hungarian infantry regiment was for several years in garrison at Arad, and most of its soldiers had sweethearts amongst the pretty girls of the town. One day the order arrived for the regiment to leave for Mantua, in Upper Italy. Of course many tears were shed and many hearts broken.

A few weeks after the departure of the regiment a pretty girl, Marushka by name, came to see the old magician. "My dear aunt," said the girl through her tears, "ever since my fiancé, Corporal Marian, left for Italy I have been so unhappy. I think I shall die of a broken heart. But I should so like to see him once more. Could you not make him come, even if it were only for a few hours?" The old woman answered that she certainly could make him come, but the operation would be very risky and dangerous; therefore she advised the girl to abandon her wish. Marushka went away, but two or three weeks later she returned, pale and haggard; and, kneeling and crying bitterly, again begged the old woman to have pity on her and bring her Marian to her—only for a few hours! The magician once more did her best to dissuade her and even scolded her.

"You see, my foolish girl," she said, "the operation may succeed perfectly; but it is also possible that something untoward may happen, and I do not want the sin to fall on my soul!"

But when the unhappy and persevering girl came a third time, and declared that if something untoward should happen she would take the sin on her own soul, the old woman consented to bring the young corporal to see his sweetheart.

The magic operation had to be done on a "Young Friday"—that is to say, on the first Friday after the appearance of the new moon. Early in the morning of that day the girl had to go, barefooted, to the fountain to fetch a pitcher full of water. This water was poured into a new copper kettle and left on a bench in the yard in the sunshine in order that the rays of the sun might

fall on it. The incantation had to take place at midnight. An hour before that time the girl-apprentice had to make a blazing fire on the hearth and hang the copper kettle, which had been bathed in the sun, by an iron chain above the fire. A few minutes before midnight the magician and her girl-apprentice undressed themselves entirely, letting their hair fall loose on their shoulders. Punctually at midnight the old woman began to address the fire in strange words, from time to time prostrating herself before the hearth and kissing the earth in front of it. The young girl had to imitate the old woman in all her movements and gestures. Then the magician cast a handful of salt into the boiling water, at the same time throwing into the fire an old necktie which Corporal Marian used to wear. The next moment a terrible explosion shook the house to its foundations and the water in the kettle overflowed and extinguished the fire. That was the end of the operation so far as my mother remembered it.

Some days after that, late in the night, someone knocked at the window of Marushka's room, all the houses in Arad at that time being only of one storey. The knock was repeated more impatiently, and again and again, until Marushka jumped up from her bed to ask who was knocking. A husky voice answered: "Marushka, open! I am your Marian!" The girl awakened her mother, and both went to unbolt the front door. There, before the door, Marian was standing, palpitating and breathing quickly, like a dog after a long run, all his uniform in tatters as if he had been dashing through thorny hedges.

"Marushka!" he said in the deepest agitation, "Marushka, for God's sake, why were you constantly

calling me?" He stretched his arms towards her, drew her to his breast, kissed her, and fell dead!

2. "The Doctor's Wife and her Daughter." In a town near Arad a doctor had married a wealthy woman with a grown-up daughter. His wife one day came to Arad with her daughter to consult the famous magician.

"You will understand my anxiety," the lady said, "when I tell you that my daughter is now in her twenty-sixth year, and as yet no one has sought her in marriage. I want you to tell me whether she will ever marry."

Throwing a handful of haricot beans on the earthen floor of the kitchen—she received all her clients in her kitchen—the old woman said at once: "Oh, yes; your daughter will certainly marry, but for the present there is an impediment. Yes, a woman stands in the way!"

"Could you not remove that obstacle?" asked the doctor's wife.

"Oh, yes; certainly," answered the magician; and then arranged the fee with the doctor's wife.

This satisfactorily arranged, the old woman invited her new clients to come with her to the garden, at the same time ordering her girl-apprentice to bring an axe to her. She came to a slender peach tree, took the daughter by the hand, and walked with her three times round the tree, muttering the while some formulæ in a strange language. Then she placed the axe into the girl's hand and asked her to have a good cut at the slender stem. This done, the magician asked them to come again to her on the following Friday. They did so, and the girl had again to strike a blow with the axe, deepening the first cut. This was repeated on two

or three consecutive Fridays until at last the peach tree was completely cut down.

"Now," the witch said to them, "the impediment will be speedily removed; and you may be sure, madam, that your daughter will be married within a year!"

Driving home, the doctor's wife suddenly felt ill. Notwithstanding her husband's efforts she grew worse and worse, and in a few days she was dead. Within a year of her death the doctor married his step-daughter.

I could give a few more such stories which my mother related as having happened while she was, from her sixth to her twelfth year, living with the old Wallachian magician. Of course, she learned some minor magic herself, which she used principally for reconciling estranged lovers, or husband and wife who were contemplating divorce, and who, owing to my mother's innocent magic, were reconciled and lived ever afterwards in perfect harmony and love!

My mother was a patriot. Like every Serbian woman, she knew everything about our history; about Nemanya, St. Sava, Tsar Dushan, Tsar Lazar, Tsaritsa Militsa, and our national heroes Kralyevich Marco, Milosh Obilich, Ban Strahinya—she knew all these things, not from written histories, but from the national ballads which were sung, or rather recited, by "Guslari," as our national bards are called. As soon as I learned to read she made me read our national heroes' songs (*Yunachke Pyesme*, in the collection of Vuk Stefanovich Karajich). My first journey was a visit to my grandfather, which I combined with a visit to the Ravanitsa Monastery, where the embalmed body of Tsar Lazar lay in a silver coffin (*see* Preface). I remember even now, in my old days, every detail of that wonderful

journey, on which my mother took me, then only in my seventh year, and my sister Anka, two years younger than I. How little worldly wisdom my father had, notwithstanding his great Latin scholarship, can be seen from the fact that he let his wife, then a young and pretty woman of twenty-three, dressed in the glaring Serbian national costume, travel with two young children in a country which had not yet settled down to normal conditions after the revolution of 1848-9. We met several convoys of Magyar prisoners, some of whom fell into a rage on seeing a Serbian woman in the national costume, and shook their fists at us. My mother had to borrow a pistol and cartridges from a coachbuilder on the outskirts of the town of Semlin. My sister and I laughed merrily, seeing our mother carrying, in the silk belt around her waist, a big pistol.

The village (Yazak by name) in which our grandfather lived was about two hours' journey by carriage from the monastery of Ravanitsa. I think on the third day after our arrival my father's younger brother took us to the monastery. My father was well known in all the monasteries of Frushka Gora as a learned man who had nearly become a monk himself; and still more popular with the monks was my grandfather, who often sent to the monastery barrels of wine and *shlyivovitsa* (a whisky made of plums) as presents. It was not surprising—although I was, as a little boy, deeply impressed—that the abbot, a tall thin man with a white beard, in a long black robe, and with a long silver stick in his hand, surrounded by a dozen black-robed monks, received us at the gate of the monastery with some solemnity, while all the bells of the church tower were ringing merrily. They took us in a sort of pro-

cession to the church and to the coffin containing the embalmed body of Tsar Lazar. My mother, in tears from her deep emotion, raised me up in her arms to kiss what was supposed to be the hand of the Tsar, and said to me: "You have read the song about the battle of Kossovo. That is the body of our Tsar Lazar, who died gloriously for the Holy Cross and our precious liberty!" She was quoting the lines of the national ballad.

The monks showed us numbers of reliques—gold and silver goblets, swords, paunchers and vestments; and a tunic, supposed to have been worn by Tsar Lazar at the battle of Kossovo, made of silver-grey corded silk, with five buttons of imitation pearls. Originally the tunic had six buttons, but a woman cut off one and carried it away, only to find, on reaching her home, that the stolen button had disappeared and that her own right arm was paralysed and dried up to a wooden stick!

The monks gave my mother and my uncle quite a grand banquet in their great dining-room, the walls of which were covered by frescoes representing scenes from the battle of Kossovo, which a young monk minutely explained to us. The old abbot, who presided, went so far in his courtesy as to propose the health and happiness of my mother. All the monks sang beautifully in chorus the famous Serbian song, "May you live many years!" While they were singing my mother was sobbing. When the abbot, at the end of the song, asked her why she wept, she said: "I weep from joy, feeling so happy that I brought my children to kiss the hand of our holy Tsar Lazar!"

This, my first journey, and my first visit to Ravanitsa,

made a deep impression on me. In later years I never could think of Tsar Lazar and Kossovo battle without remembering the incidents I have briefly related. Throughout my life I have often recalled that scene in the dining-room of the monastery, where my mother was surrounded by the monks, pleased to entertain so young and beautiful a woman. One of my cherished but not fulfilled ambitions has been to write a history of Tsar Lazar. Instead of that history, which would have had all the features of grand tragedy, I wrote the life of Lazar's grandson George Brankovich, which also was a tragedy, although not such a grand one as that of Lazar.

When, after the death of my father, my mother married Vassa Berar, the general manager of the Government's printing press, we children (I and my two sisters) had a still more enjoyable time. Our stepfather was a highly cultured and very kind-hearted man, a great lover of books and music. Him I have to thank for my intellectual development, as for the growth of my artistic instincts I have to thank my great friend the artist Stefan Todorovich. But for my faith in God, in the high destiny of my nation, and the still higher destinies of humanity; for my constant wish to be helpful and kind to everybody; for my belief in the beauty and goodness of this world; for my optimism, mysticism and occultism I have to thank my dear mother.

I wish to mention yet one other strange incident in connection with my mother. One day, while in my fifteenth year, my mother summoned me into the drawing-room. There I found a middle-aged man sitting on a chair and holding on his knees a basket full

of newly-made slippers. My mother said to me: "This is my friend Yefta, the slipper-seller, whose true profession is clairvoyance—that is, the foresight and foretelling of coming events. I wish you to give him your hand for a moment that he may tell us the principal events of your life!"

More to please my mother than because I wished to know my future, I gave my hand to Yefta Papujiya, the slipper-maker. He glanced a moment at my palm, then closed his eyes and, still holding my hand in his, spoke as follows:

"You seem now weakly and sickly, but you have strong vitality and will live comparatively long. You will presently go on a journey to visit foreign Universities. At one of these great schools you will meet a foreign lady several years older than yourself and will marry her. You will be either a preacher or teacher, for I see you speaking to a crowd of young men. Now I see you going to different Courts and shaking hands with Kings and Queens. You will have great opportunities of making money, but you will not use them. The money you will make you will share with others who are nothing to you, and you will remain poor all your life. You will commit two mistakes which will prevent you from being the leader of your nation, which otherwise you would have been. You will live for many years abroad. But the day is coming when your country will call you to return, offering a much higher position than any you have ever occupied. You will hesitate, but in the end you will accept it and do good service to your people. You will live in a great house; I think it looks like a palace. I see a grand staircase. Two men, bearing red belts or sashes, walk upstairs. You

receive them in a large room. They rush suddenly at you with knives and revolvers and assassinate you. Yes; you will die by assassination. And after your death your people will pay great homage to your memory!"

I acquired the impression that Yefta was telling me impossible things. How could I go to foreign Universities when I knew that my stepfather could not afford the necessary expense? And how absurd to say that I was to marry a foreign lady several years older than myself! That certainly should never take place! And then how could I, the son of a poor Serbian professor, go to foreign Courts and shake hands with Kings and Queens? Even to my mother, who had abounding faith in Yefta's clairvoyance, all his forecast seemed rather puzzling and improbable.

Yet, three years later, the Government of Serbia sent me to foreign Universities at the expense of the nation. And I *did* marry a foreign lady several years older than I was. And as professor I addressed crowds of students at the High School of Belgrade. And I *did* go to different Courts of Europe and shake hands with Kings and Queens! Having known all these improbabilities realised in my own person, I believe also that the end of the forecast will be fulfilled, and that I shall die as the victim of a political assassin.

CHAPTER I

My First Mission

MY personal inclination was always for literary work. I never thought of being, and never wished to be, a diplomat. But whatever we may think of our free will and of our being the makers of our destiny, the circumstances of a practical life, over which we have no control, do not take any consideration of our personal inclinations. At any rate this has been my own experience, but it may be that I am a man without a particularly strong will.

I began my public career as professor of political economy and finance in the High School (*Velika Shkola*) of Belgrade, an institution which later blossomed into the University of Belgrade. I was only in my twenty-third year when I was appointed to the chair. The four years I worked as professor (1865-9) were the happiest of my life. I wrote several books on political economy and finance, besides numerous articles on the blessings of Free Trade, on the advantage of constructing railways and establishing banks. A great number of pupils from different "faculties" flocked to my lectures, including almost all who afterwards became prominent as statesmen and political workers in Serbia from 1880 to the present time. When the Prime Minister of Serbia, M. Nikola Pashich, in June, 1914, proposed to make me Archbishop of Skoplye (Uskub), he said: "I am delighted to offer you this

dignity, as I never forget that you were my professor, and a very good professor indeed!" My answer was: "As you were my pupil, and are now so successful a Prime Minister, I begin to think that, after all, I must have been really a good professor!" And we both laughed.

Besides my chair I filled the post of secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia, working in Belgrade. Through that Chamber I stepped into the diplomatic world. It happened in this way:

On the assassination of Prince Michael (Obrenovich III.), on June 10th, 1868, the situation was saved for the dynasty principally by the energy of the War Minister, General Blaznavatz, and order was preserved by the prompt appointment of a Regency and its judicious activity. The Chamber, composed of twelve merchants, decided to go in a body to thank the Regents for their great service to the country and to commerce. Naturally I, as their secretary, accompanied them.

We were received by the two Regents, General Blaznavatz and Jovan Ristich (the third Regent, Gavrilovich, being absent). Jovan Ristich was already well known as the best and most successful of Serbian diplomatists, especially since he, as Envoy to the Sublime Porte, was the principal co-operator with Prince Michael and the Prime Minister Iliya Garashanin in obtaining the cession of Turkish fortresses in Serbia. But in replying to the thanks of the Chamber both Regents spoke in a somewhat loose way. General Blaznavatz told the members that, as rumours of the conspiracy to assassinate the childless Prince Michael has been in circulation, he thought it his duty to con-

sider what he, as War Minister, ought to do in case the Prince should be slain; and he came to the conclusion that the army should at once proclaim Michael's second cousin, the fourteen-year-old Milan Obrenovich, as the Prince of Serbia. He added that he spoke about it to Mr. Ristich, the second Regent, who, in confirming the statement of his colleague, mentioned that he told him he (Ristich) wished to act with him in that case, to show how far he would go with him in upholding the Obrenovich dynasty on the throne.

Unfortunately the Chamber of Commerce entirely misunderstood the words of the Regents. The second day after the interview I was summoned to Mr. Ristich, who informed me, with consternation, that the members were spreading the story that both Regents had confessed that they knew the assassination of Prince Michael would take place and had formed their plans as to what they ought to do as Regents after the murder. Mr. Ristich requested me to write a report of what they really said and to publish it under my name as the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce. I sat down at once, wrote a draft of my eventual report, and submitted it to Mr. Ristich. He read it slowly, read it a second time, and then, giving me his hand, said: "There is not a word to be left out nor a word to be added. I thank you and congratulate you. No diplomatist could have written a better report. I think you ought to enter the diplomatic service!"

When, in 1869, I left the High School and became head of the administrative department of the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Ristich often called me to the Foreign Office and asked me to write diplomatic notes concern-

ing Serbia's commercial policy, as he was not satisfied with the drafts for such notes prepared by the chief of the political department of the Foreign Office. Serbia had at that time a controversy with Prussia touching the tariff on the importation of German goods into the country. In that duel we succeeded in gaining a victory for our views, and Mr. Ristich again congratulated me on my diplomatic aptitude and urged me to enter the diplomatic service. Thereupon, as was not unnatural, the chief of the political department, one of the most brilliant of lawyers and politicians, took umbrage, and, although we belonged to the same political party (the Progressists, while Mr. Ristich was leader of the Liberals), and later had to work together in the same Government, he never forgave me for my involuntary intrusion into the Foreign Office.

In that year (1869) the Regency, at the suggestion of Mr. Ristich, entrusted me with my first diplomatic mission. This was to visit Count Andrassy, the Prime Minister of Hungary, in Budapest, and Count Beust, in Vienna, to ascertain the details of the contract between Turkey and Baron Hirsch for the construction of the Ottoman railways, and to learn whether it were true that Serbia was ignored, in which event I was to protest and try to enlist the support of Austria and Hungary in an endeavour to modify the contract so far in our favour as to ensure that the connection of Constantinople and Salonica with Vienna and Western Europe by railway should pass through Serbia. It was a responsible mission for a young man not yet twenty-seven who had had no diplomatic training.

To the Regents, as well as to me personally, it was clear that the political, economical and agricultural

interests of our country required that the Ottoman railways ought to communicate with Central and Western Europe through Serbia. Mr. Ristich was already a Russophile in politics, especially since the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople had co-operated in securing the evacuation of Turkish fortresses in Serbia. But although a Russophile, Russian statesmen naturally did not keep him informed of all their movements in their Balkan policy, nor had he at that time the habit of asking confidentially the advice of the Russian Ministers in Belgrade before undertaking a step of importance. Nor had I the slightest notion of what was going on behind the scenes in the promotion of Russian policy in the Balkans.

To my astonishment and dismay I found myself in Budapest and Vienna in the thick of a conflict of vital Balkan interests between Russia and Austria-Hungary. I was told in both cities that Russian diplomacy was working to prevent the construction of any Ottoman railways at all in the Balkans, and, unable to secure this, had induced the Porte to let its railways join the Austrian through Bosnia, where the difficulties of the ground made the construction almost impossible, at that time, or only at a great cost in time and money. They were opposed to the connection of the Balkan railways with the Austro-Hungarian through Serbia principally from military and political considerations.

Although I reported to the Regency what I had heard about the Russian point of view, my instructions were to proceed with the demand that the lines should go through Serbia and not through Bosnia. General Blaznavatz even wrote a postscript ordering me to inform Andrassy and Beust that, if the Turks should begin to

build the railway through Bosnia Serbian bands would destroy every night what the Turks built during the day. I was in Budapest when I received these instructions, and I spoke to Count Andrassy in accordance with them.

After looking at me for a while the Hungarian Prime Minister said: "You are a young man and evidently a beginner in diplomacy. Write to your Government that I have told you that Diplomacy never uses menacing language unless the country it represents is ready to declare war in forty-eight hours. Ask them to withdraw that part of their instructions!"

I reported Count Andrassy's remark, but my instructions were not modified, and in Vienna I thought it my duty to repeat the warning. Count Beust—quite a different type of statesman from Count Andrassy—only smiled and said: "Oh, no; I am sure it will never come to that. All we need at the moment is patience. The contract between the Ottoman Government and Baron Hirsch ought to be modified and will be modified. We are glad to see your Government so alive to the conditions of Serbia's prosperity, and we will do all we can to secure the passing through Serbia of the Constantinople—Vienna railway."

For the next nine years the struggle between Russian and Austro-Hungarian diplomacy with reference to the Ottoman railways was continued. In the beginning Serbia was working on her own lines and exclusively for her own interests. We wanted the great trunk railway to pass through our country and not through Bosnia, and only vaguely began to perceive that Russian policy rather favoured the Bosnian project. In 1873 a Conservative Cabinet under Jovan Marinovich—a statesman

considered to be *persona gratissima* at the Russian Court—replaced the Liberal Cabinet of Mr. Ristich. I entered Marinovich's Cabinet as Minister of Finance, and at once insisted that our principal and immediate task should be to secure the passing through Serbia of the Trans-European and Orient Railway.

As the new Prince of Serbia, Milan Obrenovich, delayed going to Constantinople to pay homage to the Sultan, his Suzerain, and as the Sultan wished to receive his homage, Mr. Marinovich communicated confidentially to the Porte that he would bring the young Prince to Constantinople if the Porte undertook that, as a reward and encouragement for her loyalty, the Sultan would grant Serbia her desire concerning the railways. The Serbian Minister in Constantinople (Philip Christich) reported that the Porte formally undertook to do so. Thereupon Prince Milan, accompanied by his Prime Minister, went to Constantinople, was brilliantly received and entertained, but in the end the Sultan and his Government refused to comply with their promise. They rather wished to postpone a decision, and excused themselves by saying that even that great friend of Serbia, "the Russian Ambassador, General Ignatieff, thought it would not be wise for the Sultan to create the precedent of making every act of dutiful loyalty on the part of a vassal immediately payable by important political or economical concessions on the part of the Sultan." It was really General Ignatieff who on that occasion prevented the solution of the Ottoman railway question in favour of Serbia, and the logical consequence of the failure of our diplomacy in Constantinople was that the Marinovich Cabinet had to resign. Practically we were dismissed—and that not very graciously—by

Prince Milan, who was extremely annoyed that he was deceived by the Sublime Porte.

I may safely say that from that time the personal animosity of Prince Milan against General Ignatieff was intensified. It began a few months earlier. Up to the formation of the Marinovich Cabinet Serbia had only copper coins (pennies) as her national money. One of my first tasks, as Minister of Finance, was to introduce the decimal system of weights and measures and to coin Serbian silver francs, giving them the name of *dinar*, which was the name of the silver coin that circulated in the reigns of the old Kings of the Nemanyich dynasty in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. To our intense surprise our Minister in Constantinople reported that General Ignatieff advised the Porte to protest against the issue of silver coins, to which Serbia, as a vassal State of the Sultan, had no right—the coining of silver and gold money being a prerogative of the Sovereign! Prince Milan, impetuous, sensitive and inexperienced as he was, at once took Ignatieff's action as a personal insult. I did my best to show him that there could be nothing personal in the matter, and that the General was only working to win the confidence of the Porte by proving himself occasionally a greater Turk than the Turks themselves.

I really had not distinguished myself in that first diplomatic mission of mine. It was only for the purpose of getting information and of asking Austria-Hungary to support us in Constantinople in obtaining the connection of the European railways with the Balkan railways through Serbia. There was no need to ask the Dual Monarchy for that support. It would have insisted that

the connection of the Austro-Hungarian lines with the Ottoman railways should go through Serbia, even if we had been opposed to it. But we felt it incumbent to "do something," for it was vital to our most important commercial and economical interests that the Orient Express from Paris to Constantinople and Salonica should run through our country.

CHAPTER II

The London Black Sea Conference

RUSSIA'S neutrality during the war between Germany and France in 1870-71—so decidedly benevolent for Germany—seems to have been secured by previous secret arrangement between Prussia and Russia. Anyhow, after the French disaster at Sedan, Russia notified the Great Power Signatories to the Paris Treaty of 1856 that she no longer considered herself bound by the article of the Treaty which stipulated that she should keep no fleet in the Black Sea. Prussia declared at once her agreement with Russia's decision. But Great Britain stood then—as she stood in 1908 and in 1914—for the sanctity of International Treaties, and maintained the principle that no Power could release herself from engagements which she undertook by Treaty unless she were freed by the consent of all the other co-signatories. Austria-Hungary at that time sided with the British point of view and supported the British suggestion of a Conference of the Great Powers in London, in order practically to release Russia from her Black Sea engagements; but she attached a special condition to her co-operation, namely, that in connection with the Black Sea question certain points concerning the navigation of the Danube should be considered and decided. The connection between the two was plausible enough, and the Powers agreed to the Austro-Hungarian condition. The London Conference met in the beginning of 1871 accordingly.

Serbia had no diplomatic representatives abroad then, except in Constantinople. Among the diplomatic agents of the Great Powers in Belgrade nobody knew anything about the Danubian questions which were to be submitted to the Conference. So the Regents hurriedly dispatched me to London to represent Serbia at the Conference. They shared the prevailing ignorance on the specific points mentioned, and had no precise instructions to give me. "All we can tell you at this moment is this," was Mr. Ristich's pithy command; "go to London and defend Serbia's interests if they should be menaced!"

At my first interview with Earl Granville, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he informed me that, as Serbia was a vassal country of Turkey, I could not come—even "semi-officially"—into touch with the Conference unless introduced officially by the Turkish Ambassador. He added that he had made that very day a similar declaration to the Rumanian representative, Mr. Strat.

"As that formality," I answered, "is the logical consequence of the fact that Serbia is a vassal country of the Sultan, and as that vassalage would not be put an end to by my refusal to be introduced by the Sultan's Ambassador, I will go to-morrow to Musurus Pasha and ask him to introduce me formally to your Lordship!"

Earl Granville thought I was acting wisely.

The Rumanian representative, Mr. Strat, assured me that evening that he had refused to be introduced by the Turkish Ambassador, and had consequently been informed that he could not be even "semi-officially" received by the Foreign Office nor by the Conference.

Mr. Strat asked me to let him have all the information at my disposal concerning the work of the Conference, which I promised to do.

Baron Brunnow, then Russian Ambassador in London, was an old gentleman and very kind to me, helping me often with his advice. He liked to chat and narrate amusing stories from his long experience. He approved of my intention to be introduced to Earl Granville and the members of the Conference by Musurus Pasha. Speaking of that, he told me a story of the Serbian Princess Julia Obrenovich, *née* Countess Hunyadi.

After the bombardment of Belgrade in 1862 by the Turkish forces in the citadel it was the British Ambassador in Constantinople who prevented the Porte from granting the concessions which Prince Michael asked for. Michael and his Government saw clearly that Serbia ought to obtain Great Britain's support in Constantinople, and as Serbia, a vassal principality of Turkey, had no right to regular diplomatic representation abroad, Michael sent to London his own wife, Princess Julia, to plead unofficially the Serbian claim, namely, the surrender of all the fortresses that were guarded by Turkish garrisons. Princess Julia was a great beauty and a highly-cultured woman, but exceedingly proud of her family connection with the Hungarian national hero, Hunyadi Janos. In London she naturally expressed a wish to visit Queen Victoria, and was told the Queen would be pleased to see her but political exigencies demanded that she should be introduced by the wife of the Turkish Ambassador. The Princess refused for some time to acquiesce in that convention; but, conscious of the abnormality and

awkwardness of her position in London Society without having paid her respects to the Queen, she was persuaded at last by the Russian and Austrian Ambassadors to submit to the unavoidable formality. Madame Musurus came with her brougham to fetch her, but Princess Julia entered the carriage without saluting the Ambassadress, took a seat on her right hand, opened the window, and during all the drive looked outside without uttering a word.

Baron Brunnow asked me what I thought about it. I told him that I regretted a Serbian Princess could behave so rudely; but that, after all, on that occasion she acted not as the Princess of Serbia but as Countess Hunyadi. Baron Brunnow added that all the members of the Corps Diplomatique in London were sorry for Madame Musurus and disapproved of Princess Julia's incivility.

Baron Brunnow told me another story which had especial interest for me as a Serb.

After 1848 it seemed that Prince Alexander Karageorgevich never convoked the Serbian National Assembly (*Skupshtina*). This caused general dissatisfaction, and certain politicians worked to replace the Protectorate of Russia by a Protectorate of all the Great Powers, and then to induce these Powers to grant a liberal constitution and oblige the Prince to reign constitutionally. The President of the Council of State, Mr. Jovan Marinovich, submitted to the Emperor Napoleon III. a confidential memorandum on the question. At the sitting of the Conference at which it was unanimously voted that Serbia's autonomy should be placed under the guarantee of all the Great Powers, the President, Count Walevsky, proposed that an International Commission should inquire

into the political condition of the country and eventually establish a constitutional régime. The proposal came as a surprise, and for a minute or two the representatives of the Great Powers were silent. Then Baron Brunnow suggested that, since most of them did not know the country well enough to say whether the Serbs desired a constitution, or would accept one from an International Commission, the Ottoman delegate, Ali Pasha, might favour the Conference with his opinion, as he was most familiar with Serbia.

Ali Pasha suavely responded: "I could not advise the sending of an International Commission to Serbia. Much less would I recommend any of my friends to accept membership of such a Commission. We know the Serbs as a rather turbulent race, full of suspicion against foreigners, and I am afraid they would sooner massacre the European Commissioners than give a banquet in their honour!"

Ali Pasha's remarks produced such an impression that Walevsky withdrew his proposal! Baron Brunnow laughed heartily in telling me that story, and evidently enjoyed the cleverness by which he had saved Serbia from the meddling of an International Commission with her internal affairs.

If Ali Pasha, however, were to be taken seriously, he only showed his small knowledge of the Serbs by depicting us as cut-throats. Two years later (1858) the Porte sent Edhem Pasha and Kabouli Effendi to Serbia as Special Commissioners to inquire into the conflict between Prince Alexander and the Council of State, and not only were their throats not cut, but a great banquet and a State ball were quite properly given in their honour!

I ought to add that Musurus Pasha, in introducing me to the members of the Conference, said: "I do not know whether any of your Excellencies have visited Serbia, but I, who have been there, can tell you that the Serbian women are the handsomest in the world!" We certainly have rather pretty women, but Musurus Pasha's praise was a trifle overdone. Still, when I remember the wrong done us by Ali Pasha in Paris, I am grateful to Musurus Pasha for his exaggeration in London.

I quickly discovered what was the aim of Austria. Her delegate, Count Szechen, did not—and would not —make a mystery of it. The moment I heard him claim the policing of the entire river Danube on both shores up to the Sulina, I told him, without instructions from Belgrade, that Serbia must have the policing of her shores of the Danube in her own hands, but that she would consent to Austria being entrusted with the making of a safely navigable canal through the Iron Gates (the Danubian Cataracts). I at once drew up a memorandum expressing these views and submitted it to all the members of the Conference. Baron Brunnow was delighted with my memorandum, and only regretted that it was not couched exactly in the most elegant of French. He gently reproached me for not having shown him the memorandum before I submitted it to the Conference, as he could have lent me one of his secretaries to help me finish it *à la mode*. But I thought it well to avoid any suspicion of being under the influence of the Russian Embassy.

My Government approved of my action and my memorandum, and published my reports (together with the memorandum) in the first Blue Book which the

Serbian Foreign Office ever published. My friend Mr. Strat thanked me effusively, telling me that I had defended successfully the interests not of Serbia only, but those of Rumania also. Austria's ambition to secure the sole policing of the blue Danube was frustrated. It was Serbia's first diplomatic victory over Austria.

CHAPTER III

The Secret Treaty with Austria-Hungary

I AM going to write now of a most delicate matter, a secret State document. Although it bears the signatures of King Milan and the Prime Minister Pirotyanatz besides my own, as that of Minister for Foreign Affairs, I always—while King Milan and Mr. Pirotyanatz were living—took full and entire responsibility for it. Much more do I do so now, since both King Milan and Mr. Pirotyanatz are dead. The latter in his declining years regretted that he attached his signature to the Treaty, but neither King Milan nor I regretted it, although both he and I had to suffer much—and I am suffering even to this day—in consequence.

Although I am personally concerned, I wish to assure the reader that I mean to write as an impartial historian. In any case the Treaty now belongs to history, and ought to be handled in the historical manner. And I flatter myself that I can deal with it in that way.

To explain the political atmosphere in which we, the Serbian Progressists, found ourselves in 1880 when we formed the Progressist Cabinet, and the psychological condition in which we had to work, I must cite certain facts.

Most of Serbia's people were always Russophile. Every Serb knows that Serbs and Russians are ethnographically first cousins, that we are both members of the great Slav family, that we belong to the same Church

(Orthodox Eastern Church), that our church services are identical in rites and language (Old Slavonic), and that our colloquial languages are very similar although not quite identical. And every Serbian takes almost a personal pride in the greatness and power of Russia. Among the Serbians who had higher education, especially among those who studied at the German and French Universities, you could sometimes meet men who had their "doots" as to the ultimate object of Russian policy concerning other Slav nations, and more especially concerning Serbs and Bulgars, and who did not admit the identity of the Serb and Russian political interests in all circumstances and at all times. But these men were only a small minority and without influence on the mass, which was always, and still now is, solidly Russophile.

But Serb Russophiles do not go so far as gladly to consent to allow themselves to be absorbed by Russia and transformed into Russians. This was shown at the final solemn meeting at the Ethnographic Exhibition of the Slavs in Moscow in 1867. On that occasion the leaders of the Russian Slavophiles (otherwise known as Panslavists) proposed to the representatives of all other Slav nations a resolution in favour of the adoption of the Russian language as the literary language of all the Slavs. The Czechs gave an evasive answer; the Bulgars were the only Slavs who agreed absolutely; and the Serbs were the only Slavs who absolutely and clearly refused to agree. That meeting was an important landmark, as from that time the Slavophile party in Russia —gaining from year to year in influence at home—began to neglect Serb interests and to espouse in every way those of the Bulgars. Under the inspiration of that

party the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, General Ignatieff, obtained from the Porte the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870. The same Ambassador persuaded the Porte to give the majority of the dioceses in Macedonia, and even in Old Serbia, to the Bulgarian bishops, who at once undertook the proper "Bulgarising" of Macedonia, which until then was looking to Serbia for guidance and salvation.

This "Bulgarisation" of Macedonia and Old Serbia (Kossovo Vilayet) under the indirect, and sometimes direct, support of the Russian Ambassador, gave a shock to the Serbs, not only in Macedonia, but in strongly Russophile Serbia too. The people found consolation in the belief that that was not the intention of the Tsar and his Government, but rather a personal hobby of General Ignatieff. Everyone in Serbia was aware that the country, although not prepared for war, declared war on Turkey in 1876 at the instance of the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, and that, after having been defeated by the Turks in that year, and having been saved from a catastrophe by the intervention of the Tsar, they again entered into war with Turkey in 1877 to assist the Russian Army which was trying to cross the Balkans. Everyone expected that the Treaty of Peace dictated by Russia would bring Serbia her well-earned reward.

It is impossible to describe the amazement of the Serbs when they heard that the San Stefano Treaty stipulated for Serbia only the "rectification of the frontiers," while at the same time creating a Great Bulgaria, comprising Bulgaria proper (the province between the Balkans and the Danube), Roumelia, portions of Thrace, the whole of Macedonia (with the exception

of Salonica) up to the lake of Ochrida, and even certain parts of Old Serbia, with Uskub, Vranya, Leskovats and, to the east of Nish, the important strategical town of Pirot. It was the Liberal Government, with Mr. Ristich at its head, that framed the Russophile policy, committing the country to acts for which they knew it was not prepared, but doing so in the faith that Serbia's sacrifice and risks would be abundantly rewarded by Russia. No one was more bitterly disappointed than the Liberals of Serbia when they read the text of the San Stefano Treaty.

Their disappointment—and, indeed, the disappointment of every Serb—was intensified when Mr. Ristich, the Premier and Leader of the Liberals, reported his experiences to the nation as the only delegate of Serbia at the Congress of Berlin. He had there to combat the Russian efforts to get Pirot and Vranya for Bulgaria. At last Count Shuvaloff (the second Russian delegate and assistant of Prince Gorchakoff) told the greatest Russophile among the Serbs (Mr. Ristich) that Russia could not do anything for Serbia at that time, and that he had better address himself to Count Andrassy, the Austro-Hungarian Prime Minister and the first delegate of the Dual Monarchy at the Congress. It was most painful for Mr. Ristich to do so, as he was well known not only for his Russophilism, but also for his Austrophobia, sharing in that respect the sentiments of every average Serb. To obtain Serbia's extension to a point south of Vranya and to add Pirot to Serbia, he had to consent to sign a special Convention with Count Andrassy, binding Serbia to construct the Serbian section of the railway, Vienna—Constantinople and Vienna—Salonica, within three years, and to enter at once into

negotiations for a commercial treaty with Austria-Hungary. When all these facts became known, and especially the facts that Russia, wishing to create a Great Bulgaria, gave to her Serbian Macedonia, and that Russia, by the agreement made in 1875 at Reichstadt, consented to the Austrian occupation of Bosnia, utter consternation seized the Serbs of all parties.

Partly owing to his own disgust at the failure of his Russophile policy, and partly to unwillingness to expose himself and his party to unpopularity by increasing the taxation (inevitable in consequence of Serbia's engagement to build the railway), Mr. Ristich resigned in October, 1880, and Prince Milan invited Mr. Pirotyanatz and Mr. Garashanin, the leaders of the Progressists, to form a new Government. I entered this Cabinet as Minister of Finance and of Foreign Affairs, as my colleagues thought that the negotiations for a treaty of commerce with Austria-Hungary and the execution of other engagements entered into by Mr. Ristich in his Berlin Convention with Andrassy, would be facilitated if both portfolios were placed in the hands of one person.

The Progressist Cabinet began its work with an open mind. We certainly were not Russophile, but much less were we Austrophile. We shared the general disappointment with Russian Balkan policy, but we naturally disliked the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, two Serb provinces. At the same time we thought it in the best interests of our nation that we should loyally execute all the obligations which the Berlin Treaty imposed on our country and all the engagements which Mr. Ristich undertook in Berlin towards Austria-Hungary in the name and on behalf of

Serbia. After the war of 1876-7 our country needed peace and rest to work at its own recuperation and economical and agricultural progress. Public opinion in Serbia approved of that programme. Official Russia —that is the responsible Government of the Tsar— thought the programme necessitated by the circumstances, and even advised us to entertain "correct" relations with Austria-Hungary. But "unofficial" Russia—that is, the leaders of the Slavophile party—was not satisfied. It was under the impression that after the humiliation at the Berlin Congress Russia must prepare for, and within the next ten years declare war on Austria, and that Serbia's policy ought to be shaped with a view to that eventuality. We were not disposed to allow Serbia's policy to be guided by irresponsible members of the Slavophile Committees of Moscow and Petrograd (though this name was not then in vogue). And therefore relations with those Committees were not and could not be very cordial from the very beginning of our existence as a Government.

My strength and my weakness consist in my frankness. On my first visit to the Russian Minister in Belgrade I ventured to express the hope that henceforth Russia would not be a mother to Bulgaria and stepmother to Serbia. Mr. Persiani was the most charming of men personally, but he had a peculiar knack of cracking jokes and laughing during the most serious conversation. He simply laughed at my boldness in expecting Russia to change her Balkan policy the moment I held the portfolio of Serbia's Foreign Affairs. I did not feel hurt as Persiani and I had been friends for many years, and I knew his "manner" in discussing grave questions.

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My anxieties were concerned more with Austria-Hungary. To secure for our country tranquillity we were ready to execute loyally and completely *all* our Berlin engagements and obligations, and thereby give proof to our great neighbour that we wished to maintain indisputably amicable relations with her. But our people felt the Austrian occupation of Bosnia very keenly, and would feel still more alarmed should Austria-Hungary push farther southwards than Novi-Bazar, though, unfortunately, the Treaty of Berlin authorised her to extend her boundaries eventually "up to the other side" (*au delà*) of Mitrovitza. Of course, with all our anxiety to cultivate friendly relations with the Dual Monarchy, we could not do so if the Austro-Hungarian army were to press on towards Kossovo and Mitrovitza. I suggested and obtained my colleagues' consent to go to Vienna for a frank explanation with the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister. The Minister at that time was Baron Haymerlé, but he had for his assistants, as Under-Secretaries of State, two Hungarian noblemen, Benjamin de Kallay and Szegoenyi Marich. De Kallay and I became personal friends during his activity in Belgrade as Austro-Hungarian Diplomatic Agent, and I helped him to write his "History of Serbia," as he acknowledged in the introduction to that work.

I told these three gentlemen plainly and frankly that we were ready to execute fully all Mr. Ristich's Berlin engagements, and that we would loyally abide by the Treaty, establishing thereby friendly relations with the Dual Monarchy, provided that Austria-Hungary would not utilise the clause of the Treaty which authorised her to go eventually up to Mitrovitza.

I received from Baron Haymerlé, in the presence of de Kallay, the following assurances (I cannot quote the exact words, but give the exact meaning of the words used): "We have no intention of utilising fully the right the Berlin Treaty gave us; to prove this, we would be ready to bind ourselves, by a formal convention, to recognise the claims of Serbia to the Kossovo Vilayet and to Macedonia (up to a certain point), and to do our best at the next European Congress to induce all the Great Powers to approve of the annexation of those territories by Serbia."

In this connection I was further told by Baron Haymerlé: "The Dual Monarchy has no objection to the existence of a truly independent Serbia, cultivating good neighbourly relations with her. We have no objection to the extension of her territories in a southern direction. But if Serbia should turn out to be a 'Russian satrapy,' and were herself to abandon her independence and act on orders from Petersburg, then we could not tolerate such a Serbia on our frontier, and we would, as a lesser evil, occupy it with our armies!"

I was deeply impressed by these declarations, but, naturally, I could at that moment do nothing else but say that I would submit them to the Prince and my colleagues.

In Belgrade I reported to Prince Milan, in the presence of the Prime Minister Pirotyanatz and Home Minister Garashanin, what I was told in Vienna. They recognised that these declarations were not only very interesting, but that they might be of great importance to us. The Prime Minister apparently thought that they were of such extraordinary importance that they probably were not sincere, and that it was unlikely that

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Austria would consent to Kossovo and Macedonia being incorporated with Serbia. I reiterated my impression that the assurances were made in perfect good faith. The Prince and Garashanin thought that it was quite easy to ascertain whether they were sincere or not by telling Austria that we were ready to negotiate and eventually sign the suggested Convention, and that everything depended upon the conditions under which the Dual Monarchy would define the right of the Serbian nation to Kossovo and Macedonia.

After all four of us had recognised, according to the information which each had obtained, that Russia would not relinquish her policy of claiming Macedonia for Bulgaria, I was authorised to enter into negotiations with Austria-Hungary for the conclusion of a secret political Convention concerning Macedonia. The result of the negotiations was as follows:

I. Austria-Hungary recognised the right of Serbia to annex Kossovo and Macedonia (from watershed to watershed) with the exception of Salonica.

She undertook to support that right of Serbia at an eventual Congress which should settle the repartition of the Balkan Peninsula.

She undertook to support the interests of Serbia generally and to uphold the Obrenovich dynasty against all the attempts of its enemies.

II. On the other side Serbia had to undertake:

(*a*) Not to agitate in Bosnia against Austrian occupation.

(*b*) If Serbia should conclude secret political treaties with other Powers she must communicate confidentially to Austria-Hungary the conclusion of such treaties.

(*c*) If, whilst the Secret Convention were in force, a war should take place in the Balkan Peninsula, and the Austro-Hungarian army should require to pass through Serbia, such passage would be granted to that army.

I did not hesitate to agree to the first condition. Indeed, we would not and could not agitate for some years in Bosnia, because we were exhausted by the last two wars and because it were folly in our exhausted condition to risk an armed conflict with Austria-Hungary.

Nor did I hesitate much concerning the second condition. That engagement did not in any way compromise our liberty to conclude secret political treaties with other Powers; it only involved an undertaking to tell our friendly neighbour if and when we did make a secret treaty with another Power. Besides, I thought we were entering a period of peace and recuperation, with hardly any prospect of new political adventures. Virtually I believed we should have no reason to conclude secret treaties with other Powers as long as our engagement with Austria-Hungary lasted.

I did hesitate for some time concerning the clause marked (*c*). But in the end I thought I would find escape from the practical application of it by adroitly wording the article so as to postpone the solution to the time when a demand should be made and a concrete case arise under the Convention. As I foresaw, this concrete case never arrived.

Every shred of hesitation was removed by my proposal that the duration of the Secret Convention should be fixed for only five years, and by Austria-Hungary's acceptance of that proposal.

A copy of the draft of the Convention was sent from

Vienna to Prince Milan before I came to submit it to him and the Prime Minister. Prince Milan, impulsive as always, requested the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade to wire to the Emperor Francis Joseph that he—Prince Milan—would sign that Convention as drafted, with a single alteration, namely, the Convention should last seven years instead of five.

This personal undertaking of Prince Milan to the Emperor Francis Joseph without consulting either the Prime Minister or me, his Foreign Minister, placed me in a very delicate and most awkward position. The Prince insisted that I ought to help him to keep his word to the Emperor; in fact, that I should countersign his own signature. At the same time the Prime Minister, Pirotyanatz, was not satisfied with the wording of the article concerning our undertaking to inform Austria-Hungary of contingent secret treaties with other countries. This awkward position nearly caused the resignation of the Cabinet, both the Prime Minister and I tendering our resignations. The crisis was averted, however. I countersigned Prince Milan's signature on the Secret Convention, and then the Prime Minister went to Vienna and, in a *Protocol Explicatif*, gave to the article in question the harmless meaning which, in my opinion, the original wording expressed clearly enough.

Mr. Pirotyanatz, although my political chief and my colleague in the Cabinet, had never been my personal friend since Mr. Ristich had preferred (in 1869) my drafts of diplomatic notes to those which he drew up as chief of the political department of the Serbian Foreign Office. But I always considered him a true gentleman. When he returned from Vienna with the

Protocol Explicatif, he said to me: "Your Secret Convention with Austria is now all right. But remember this: although we call that Convention a secret one, Austria herself will show it to-morrow to Russia, and the Russian Government will never forgive Milan and yourself for having dared to look elsewhere for support when Russia refused to award Macedonia to Serbia!" I did not care if I should be persecuted to the end of my days, so long as I was satisfied in my conscience that I had honestly served the best interests of my country without fear and without hesitation.

I will only mention now a few immediate consequences of the Secret Convention.

It was in consequence of that Convention that we could restore to our country its old dignity as a Kingdom.

When the contractor for the Serbian railways, the great banking establishment the Union Générale of Paris, failed in 1882, it was in consequence of that Convention that the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, Count Goluchowsky, helped me to save Serbia any loss and to secure the construction of the Serbian railways without additional sacrifices on the part of Serbia.

And when in 1885 the Bulgarians repulsed the Serbian invasion, took Pirot and were marching on Nish, it was in consequence of that Convention that Austria-Hungary, by her ultimatum to Bulgaria, stopped a further Bulgarian march towards Nish.

It was in consequence of that Convention that Austria-Hungary made strenuous efforts to obtain for Serbia territorial compensation for Bulgaria's annexation of Roumelia. She was on the point of succeeding in those efforts when Serbia declared war on Bulgaria.

I suffered much personally in consequence of my

Secret Convention with Austria-Hungary. But all those sufferings are nothing in comparison with the great satisfaction I shall always feel whenever I remember that it was I who obtained the Emperor Francis Joseph's own signature to a document which recognised the Serbian nation's right to Macedonia.

King Milan's enemies found that their periodical attacks on him, in the Press and through gossip, for the Secret Convention, did not make much impression on the Serbians. Certainly the people did not like Serbia to have a secret political understanding with Austria, although they did like exceptional facilities for the export of their produce to that country. But the people's *Intelligenziya* (men and women who had passed through the higher schools and formed the State employees, clergy, free professions, etc.) was divided on the question. That Russia stuck to her illusions that three-fourths of the Balkan Peninsula ought to belong to Bulgaria; that she consented, in Reichstadt and afterwards at the Berlin Congress, that Bosnia and Herzegovina should be occupied by Austria; and that she advised Mr. Ristich in Berlin to negotiate directly with Austria and save what was still possible to save, these things were well known to the *Intelligenziya*, and many of its members did not seem surprised that a secret arrangement had been made.

Therefore the King's opponents, whose immediate object was to provoke a revolution and, if possible, drive him from the throne, invented a far more shocking thing than a secret political Convention. All the Press of Europe was inundated with telegrams and reports, purporting to come from Belgrade, to the effect that King

Milan had concluded a Military Convention with Austria. My friend William T. Stead, on his return from Petersburg in 1883, told me that his Slavophile friends there had assured him that King Milan had concluded a secret Military Convention with Austria, and that a General had told him he had seen a copy, according to which the Serbian army—in the case of war between Austria and Russia—was to be placed under the command of the Austrian Commander-in-Chief. Similar stories were assiduously spread in all the coffee-houses in the towns, as well as in all the inns (*mehanas*) in the villages and on the country roads, garnished with the additions that King Milan had sold the Serbian army to Austria for millions of pounds, and that he had secretly passed over to the Roman Catholic Church and given the Pope the right to consider the Orthodox people of Serbia as virtually recognising him (the Pope) as their Spiritual Chief. The coffee-houses in the Serbian towns and the inns in the villages are something like clubs, in which citizens and peasants meet every day to discuss politics over a cup of coffee, a glass of beer, or a small glass of *shlyivovitsa* (whisky made of plums).

Now Austria wished to make special arrangements at once that, in the event of war, the Austrian army might pass through Serbia. I refused to make these arrangements then and there, and consented only (as I have already said) to the insertion of an article in the Convention declaring that the question of passage for the Austrian army through Serbia should stand over, to be decided at a future date when (if ever) such an emergency arose.

Of the placing of the Serbian army under the command of the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, or of the

Serbian army joining the Austrian army as an eventual ally, not a single word was mentioned either in written documents or in private and confidential conversations. The entire story of a secret Military Convention between Serbia and Austria was, from beginning to end, an unscrupulous invention. I would not hesitate to tell the truth, if it were so, just as I do not hesitate to take full responsibility for the secret political Convention with Austria-Hungary.

CHAPTER IV

The Serbo-Bulgarian War

AS is well known, Bulgaria surprised the Cabinets of Europe by proclaiming in the spring of 1885 her union with Roumelia, or rather, her annexation of that country, which, according to the Treaty of Berlin, was to remain an autonomous province of Turkey with a Governor-General appointed by the Sultan, with the approval of all the signatories.

No one was more taken aback than the Russian Government. That only seven years after the creation of Bulgaria by lavish Russian sacrifices in blood and money, the Prince of Bulgaria, Alexander of Battenberg, and his Bulgarian advisers, should be able to organise a conspiracy and annex a great and rich province without letting Russia know anything about it was a bolt from the blue. Tsar Alexander III. could never forgive Prince Alexander of Battenberg that act of independent activity, and the Panslavist party in Russia decided to remove Prince Alexander from the throne of Bulgaria.

We Serbs were not only surprised but alarmed. During the Middle Ages, when we possessed our independence, both the Serbs and the Bulgars struggled with each other for supremacy in the Balkans. To express the truth in its mildest form, I must say that between the Serbs and Bulgars there never was much friendliness. Before the events of 1885 we Serbs did not hate the Bulgars, but we always thought that we

were a much superior race. We thought that the "Shôps" (as we called the Bulgars somewhat derisively) were only useful as gardeners (*bashtovani*), and that they had neither military nor political aptitudes. As we were the first Balkan nation to rise against the Turks (in 1804), and won our national autonomy by our own efforts absolutely unaided by anyone, we were proud of our intelligence, military virtues and political abilities. Afterwards we were to pay a high price for this national pride of ours, or rather for our under-estimation of our opponents. The Bulgars, on their side, have always hated the Serbs. So much only I will say here in order to show our mutual relations.

It was not jealousy that determined Serbian policy at this juncture. It was really alarm for our security. Having succeeded, without spilling a drop of blood and without spending a shilling, the Bulgars, feeling themselves stronger and finding sympathy for their bold deed everywhere (and more especially in England), except in Russia and Serbia, would be tempted to further annexations, and our Macedonia would be seriously endangered, undermined as it was by the Bulgar propaganda afoot since 1870.

Under the presidency of Garashanin, the Serbian Government protested against the annexation of Roumelia by Bulgaria, on the ground that it was a glaring infraction of the Berlin Treaty, and that the sanctity of International Treaties ought to be respected. I was at that time Serbian Minister in London. Recognising that public opinion in England approved of the Bulgarian annexation of Roumelia, and finding that the signatory Powers would not defend the sanctity of Treaties, I began to agitate in the London Press for the mainten-

ance of the doctrine of the balance of power in the Balkan Peninsula as a part of European policy, and that if Europe was to allow Bulgaria to retain Roumelia, notwithstanding the fact that she (Bulgaria) had torn up a solemn International Treaty, then Europe owed to Serbia a territorial compensation in order to restore the balance of power. I contributed considerably to the decision of my Government to leave their original platform—the sanctity of International Treaties—and take up the position of upholding the doctrine of preserving a balance of power amongst the Balkan nations, preventing any one of them from obtaining a hegemony over the others.

It was and is still generally believed that it was Austria-Hungary which incited Serbia to make war on Bulgaria. It was naturally supposed that Austria-Hungary had every interest in creating dissension and hatred among the Balkan nations so that she might the more successfully fish in troubled waters. In this particular case Austria-Hungary was unjustly accused of such a Machiavellian policy. So far as I was then and afterwards acquainted with the real facts, it seemed to me that Austria-Hungary was honestly endeavouring to prevent war between Serbia and Bulgaria. She adopted the view of the Serbian Government that the balance of power in the Balkans ought to be upheld, and she endeavoured to induce the Great Powers to agree to Bulgaria's annexation of Roumelia on condition that Serbia should get some territorial compensation. She suggested that the Bulgarian fortress Vidin (which was a great menace to the open eastern frontier of Serbia) should be ceded to Serbia, together with a strip of territory south of Pirot (Trn and Bresnik).

The Serbo-Bulgarian War

From my several interviews with Lord Salisbury and the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London, Baron Hengelmueller, I derived the impression that Great Britain was favourably disposed towards the Austro-Hungarian proposal. Lord Salisbury, whenever I saw him, asked me to transmit to my Government his advice to exercise patience and moderation and not to attack Bulgaria. I do not know how far this advice influenced the Serbian Government, but it began to consider whether it would not be better to invade Kossovo Vilayet suddenly and occupy it as compensation for Bulgaria's annexation of Roumelia—even at the risk of war with Turkey. Lord Salisbury must have received from the British Minister in Belgrade some information on this subject, because he invited me to come to see him, and said to me: "I advised your Government not to attack Bulgaria, but I never meant to hint that you might attack Turkey! On the contrary, most emphatically we do not want you to attack Turkey. Please wire at once to your Government that I made this declaration to you. If Serbia does not attack Turkey or Bulgaria Her Majesty's Government will prove to be a friend of Serbia." He refused to explain to me the true meaning of this enigmatic declaration. When I told Baron Hengelmueller that I was puzzled at what Lord Salisbury meant by his phrase, he offered, as the probable explanation, the readiness of Great Britain to support Austria-Hungary's proposal of a territorial compensation to Serbia.

Unfortunately the Serbian Government did not follow Lord Salisbury's advice, and not only lost their chance of acquiring territorial compensation for Serbia without war, but exposed the Serbian army to the humiliation

of being beaten by the young Bulgarian army and of escaping, with difficulty, from further and greater humiliation. All that happened in Serbia in the summer and early autumn of 1885 furnished me with another proof that there is a Higher Power which guides men to fulfil certain Providential objects. King Milan was a man of brilliant intelligence; his Prime Minister, Milutin Garashanin, was a man of noble character, a great patriot, and a true statesman, usually clear and far-seeing; his War Minister and Chief of the Serbian Staff, General Yotza Petrovich, enjoyed not only in Serbia but in Austria and Germany (where he studied the military art and sciences) the reputation of being a brilliant staff officer. Why these three men, whom even their enemies recognised as men of the highest capacity, should make such glaring mistakes as they did, cannot be explained on any other ground than by assuming that fate influences our affairs. They committed the fundamental mistake of not waiting to see whether the Austro-Hungarian proposal would be taken or rejected. They made the twofold mistake of undervaluing the Bulgarian army and of believing firmly, but without reasonable cause, that the Roumelian army (composed mostly of Turks) would not join the Bulgarian. They thought that the first class of our militia, composed of young, insufficiently-trained men, numbering altogether about 60,000 soldiers, would beat the Bulgars at the strong strategical position at Slivnitza and march triumphantly into Sofia within eight or ten days after the declaration of war! These were fatal blunders. Sixty thousand of Serbia's youth were met by a hundred thousand Bulgarian and Turkish soldiers (from Roumelia) at Slivnitza, were repulsed and pursued

to Pirot, which they lost after a bloody battle. Prince Alexander of Battenberg would have marched at the head of his victorious army into Nish had Count Khevenhüller, the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, not delivered to him at Pirot the order to arrest his further advance.

When I went to Nish six weeks later the Prime Minister Garashanin (my friend from boyhood) told me a curious fact, which only confirmed my theory of an inscrutable Power influencing our human affairs, notwithstanding our vain boasts of "free will." When I expressed my astonishment to my friend that our best General, Yotza Petrovich, had made such a terrible mistake in calling under arms only our first class and attacking the Bulgars with insufficient forces, Garashanin said to me: "Oh, there is something else of which I hardly dare to speak! Yotza and I have been, since the declaration of war, living day and night in the same room, or under the same tent, and our Chief of the Staff, as if he had been bewitched, could never arouse himself from a strange sleepiness! He was dozing while sitting at the table with the maps before him; he had at all hours of the day and night to stretch himself on a sofa, and I had positively to shake him to get up to receive the reports and telegrams which were pouring in. And often I had to give answers and orders in his stead. It seemed as if the Bulgars were fighting us by Magic, paralysing the brain of our army!"

I asked Garashanin why on earth he had not exercised greater patience instead of precipitating hostilities just when I thought we had better chances of evading risks and getting territorial compensation without war. He replied: "You must not think I wish to shirk my

own responsibility. As Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs I am entirely, in the face of my contemporaries and before history, responsible for this war. Frankly, I did not believe Austria would succeed in getting us compensation. In my opinion war with Bulgaria was the only practical way out of an intolerable situation. Perhaps we might have delayed it by a month or two. But you know King Milan's nerves. He had war on the brain, and thought we ought not to give time to the Bulgars to organise their defence. He got Yotza (General Petrovich) on his side, and at last we rushed into war."

Garashanin was much too noble a man to hint that King Milan was personally responsible for a badly-prepared and therefore disastrous conflict. But not quite a year later, in 1886, when I was in his Cabinet as Minister of Finance and Commerce, King Milan told me himself what was the true cause of the precipitation of the war against Bulgaria.

I was dining at the Palace, and after dinner the King took me and General Catargi (his uncle and the first aide-de-camp) into his working-room to take coffee, smoke and chat. He always treated me as a personal friend and as a man in whom he had full confidence. After we had spoken on several current topics, the conversation turned on our relations with Bulgaria, and I again took the opportunity, as I repeatedly did, to express my regret that we had made war on Bulgaria, especially as I believed we had good chances of obtaining territorial compensation without war.

King Milan then said to me: "With all your Byzantine brain"—he often called me "a Byzantine diplomatist"—"you have not been able to find out the truth.

The object of the war was neither the 'balance of power' nor compensation. My true object in the invasion of Bulgaria was to provoke war between Russia and Austria! My uncle George, here present, can confirm what I say to you now and what I confided to him on the eve of war."

General Catargi confirmed it. He enlarged upon the fact, thought that the King's idea was the idea of a political genius, and that it was a misfortune not only for the Balkan nations, but for the whole of Europe that it had not succeeded.

I had no doubt that the precipitation of the war with Bulgaria was entirely the work of King Milan in accordance with the intention which he communicated to me. But a little later in 1886, he told me something that induced me to think that at least one of his motives might be laid bare. King Milan and the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria-Hungary became intimate friends after 1881. On one occasion, when we were quite alone, the King spoke to me of his friendship with him.

"When I spoke with Rudolph last time"—that must have been either in 1884 or in the beginning of 1885—"he told me that he was most unhappy and, indeed, full of despair. He, with some of the most prominent generals of the Austro-Hungarian army, was of the opinion that, as war with Russia was inevitable, it was better to have that war at once, while Russia still felt exhausted [after the war with Turkey], while she had not yet constructed her strategic railways nor reorganised and re-equipped her army. But the older generals, the Foreign Minister, and his own father were decidedly for a policy of peace. His father

believed himself to have been born under an unlucky star, and that a kind of fatality clung to him, therefore he was personally reluctant to risk a war. Rudolph believed that if the war on Russia had been declared between 1880 and 1890 Austria-Hungary would have been victorious. With every year's delay the chances of victory for Austria-Hungary would dwindle. And this conviction that the best chances for victory were being lost made Rudolph disgusted with the leaders of Austro-Hungarian policy, and made him almost despair of the Monarchy's future!" King Milan added that he was himself absolutely of Rudolph's opinion.

This recital reminded me of an earlier statement of King Milan on the true object of his war against Bulgaria, and I could not free myself from the impression that they were somehow connected. But, of course, I do not mean to say that the Crown Prince Rudolph incited King Milan, directly or indirectly, to attack Bulgaria.

CHAPTER V

The Bucharest Peace Conference

ABOUT the eve of Christmas, 1886, I received a telegram from the Prime Minister Garashanin that I had been appointed the sole delegate of Serbia to the Conference in Bucharest to negotiate peace between Serbia and Bulgaria. The Minister added that the King desired me to come at once to Nish for my instructions.

I arranged to start in a few days. Of course, I called on and took leave of Lord Salisbury and the Ambassadors of the Great Powers. They all expressed the wish that peace might be re-established as speedily as possible. Lord Salisbury assured me that Her Majesty's Government would gladly do all they could to help Serbia to an honourable peace. He added that I, personally, might rely on every assistance he (Lord Salisbury) could give me in my mission. I told his Lordship that I regretted very much that my friend Sir William White, British Minister to Rumania, was just then absent from Bucharest.

"Never mind," said Lord Salisbury, "we have as Chargé d'Affaires there Mr. Francis Sanderson, an excellent man, a real good fellow, as you will understand when I tell you that he is brother to our Sir Thomas Sanderson. I will ask Sir Thomas to write to his brother and recommend you to every friendly care on his part." Sir Thomas was at that time the Permanent

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and his brother was Great Britain's representative on the Danubian Commission at Sulina, with authority to act as Chargé d'Affaires of the British Legation at Bucharest during the absence of Sir William White.

From London to Belgrade I travelled without stopping anywhere, but in Belgrade I remained a day and a night to rest and to pay my respects to Queen Nathalie. Before I reached the palace I met her in the principal street walking in deep snow, on a visit to the wounded soldiers in the hospitals. She invited me to accompany her, and I witnessed her magnetic influence on the poor young men. Patriotic, hopeful, and even cheerful herself, she heartened them wonderfully.

I noticed that most of the "boys" seemed to be ashamed that the Bulgars had beaten them from Slivnitza and had taken Pirot. "Forgive us, our Lady Queen, but we assure you, when we return to the battlefield, we shall make the Bulgars repent!"

To some of the wounded the Queen said: "This is Gospodin Chedo" (I am better known in my own country by my Christian than by my family name), "who is going to make peace with Bulgaria!" They all looked alarmed at that introduction, and begged me not to conclude peace before they had driven the Bulgars from Serbian soil.

When I reached Nish and arrived at the Palace, almost the first words King Milan addressed to me were: "You stopped at Belgrade for a day; did you see the Queen?"

"Yes, of course!" I answered.

"Oh, you say 'of course'! Did you see Count Khevenhüller and Mr. Pirotyanatz?"

"No," I answered.

"I wonder you did not!" the King said.

"I do not understand what you mean, Sire!"

"Well," the King answered, "I will tell you by and by, but not now."

And I will tell my readers at once what King Milan told me a little later during my stay in Nish. After the Bulgars had defeated the army, commanded by the King, at Slivnitza and Pirot, some spies reported to Milan that Count Khevenhüller, the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, and Mr. Pirotyanatz, former Prime Minister, went to the Palace and represented to Queen Nathalie that, after these reverses, the only way to save the dynasty was by the abdication of King Milan and the proclamation of Queen Nathalie as Regent for her little boy Alexander. The Queen was to be joined by two prominent statesmen as second and third Regents. Mr. Pirotyanatz would be one of those statesmen, but who would be the other?

I assured the King that during my conversation with the Queen she never uttered a word which could be interpreted to mean that she contemplated such an eventuality as a Regency. Garashanin told me that after the loss of Pirot some politicians in Belgrade had begun to talk about a Regency, and approached the Queen on the subject, but that she refused to listen to their suggestions.

I found Nish converted into a fortified camp, full of soldierly-looking men of the second class (from 25 to 35 years old), but wearing rather thin overcoats for the bitterly cold days of January, 1886. King Milan was in a state of permanent excitement, evidently pained and humiliated by his reverses. Garashanin was earnest

but sad, yet bravely bearing his misfortune. General Yotza Petrovich had resigned and was ill. The King had also relinquished the chief command of the army, and appointed General Horvatovich Commander-in-Chief. This General was known as one of the bravest and ablest officers, and at the same time one of the handsomest and toughest of soldiers. The army had full confidence in him. The soldiers, although badly equipped and shivering in the severe cold which prevails in snow-bound Serbia in January, were cheerful and confident that they would beat the Bulgars. "Until now only our beardless boys have fought and were defeated," so the men repeatedly assured me, "but the Bulgars will now have to fight the bearded Serbs, and we shall teach them what that means!"

I reported to the King, in the presence of the Prime Minister (who also held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs), the advice which Lord Salisbury and the Ambassadors of the Great Powers in London had given to me and, through me, to the Serbian Government. They all, without exception, urged us to make peace, promising to help us to reasonable terms. Both the King and his Prime Minister were of opinion that Serbia, in her first crossing of swords with Bulgaria, had been defeated more by accident than anything, and that she could not think of peace while smarting under that infliction. And much less could she think of peace now when she had every chance of defeating her enemy. I drew their attention to the fact that we were not making peace in consequence of our accidental and temporary defeat, but because all the Great Powers desired us to make peace. Practically we were yielding under the pressure of Europe, not under the pressure of Bulgaria.

To secure my adhesion to his war policy the King conveyed me in his open carriage through the camp, pointing out the martial bearing of the men, and also took me to see some experiments with subterranean mines. But all I saw only deepened my conviction that peace was the safest and wisest policy in the circumstances in which both Europe and our country stood at that time. I told the King that all he showed me made me more and more desirous of peace.

On the eve of my departure from Nish to Bucharest, a meeting of all the Ministers and principal commanders of the army was held in the Palace, the King presiding. I opened the proceedings and reported to the Council the advice which the Great Powers had given us, and stated why I thought that we ought to conciliate Europe by making peace. King Milan then made a long speech to the effect that Serbia could not make peace until her new army had driven the Bulgars out of Pirot and across the frontier. He also pointed out that we were now far better prepared than when we started the war, and that he shared the confidence of his army that we should now beat the Bulgars. The Prime Minister, Garashanin, declared himself in full agreement with the King's views. So did also the Minister of Finance, Vukashin Petrovich. Other Ministers did not utter their sentiments. I was struck with the fact that the Generals remained silent, none of them asking to be allowed to say what he thought. The King called upon the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Horvatovich, for his opinion. He began with a short and somewhat ironical laugh, as his wont was, and then spoke in this sense: "All I can say is, that we are now better prepared than at the beginning, and that therefore we have

to-day better chances than we had when marching on Slivnitza. In the event of war the army will fully do its duty. But, after all, the victory is in the hands of God!" I had the impression that the General's speech was devoid of warmth and enthusiasm and even of assurance.

King Milan took it for granted that the Ministers and Generals present were unanimously in accord with his views, and he immediately (after the terse speech of the Commander-in-Chief) formulated my instructions for me:

1. "Your first task will be to prolong the negotiations in order to procure a few more weeks to complete our preparations. You will have no difficulty in that, as you are a born 'Byzantine.'

2. "When we finish our preparations we will wire to you only one word, 'Sad' [which means "now" in Serbian], and you will then at once break off negotiations and leave Bucharest. As a good Byzantine you will easily find a plausible reason for your sudden departure.

3. "If at any time during the negotiations the Bulgars should bring forward a suggestion that Serbia should pay a war indemnity, you will instantly declare the peace negotiations at an end; that from the following morning Serbia will be at war with Bulgaria; and that you will leave Bucharest by the first train for Vericorova."

Then the King declared the Council at an end, and we all rose and left the room except the King, the Prime Minister and General Catargi. When I stepped out into the large hall I found General Horvatovich and General Miloyko Leshjanin waiting for me. Each took me by the arm and led me into a far corner of

the hall, and there both simultaneously whispered to me: "Chedo—Mir!"

Mir is the Serb word for "peace." But as my Christian name "Chedomille" (meaning "dear child") has also another form, "Chedomir" (meaning "the child of peace"), by which I am more generally known in Serbia, I asked my two friends what they meant.

"We mean to ask you," General Leshjanin said, "to try to conclude an honourable peace!"

General Horvatovich, with his ironical smile on his lips, pronounced only one word, "Yes!"

I have the reputation of being a man of great patience and full of consideration for the feelings of other people. But at that moment I could not restrain my indignation. "Are you Serb officers? Are you men? Why did you not have the courage to ask for peace while we were in the Council room, but come to whisper to me 'Mir' in this corner? I am ashamed of you!"

Thereupon General Horvatovich spoke: "Are you blind? Do you not see that we have to deal with pathological cases? The defeats at Slivnitza and at Pirot have shattered the nerves not only of the King, but of Milutin also [Milutin Garashanin, the Prime Minister]. It is no use to argue with them; it is impossible!"

Now, this incident haunted me constantly while I was in Bucharest. Both generals were my personal friends. General Leshjanin, as Commander of the Army operating against Vidin, was the only Serbian General who had some success to show against the Bulgarian army, and Horvatovich had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the entire Serbian army, to the entire satisfaction of the army and the whole people.

Yet both wished me to conclude an honourable peace, contrary to the instructions the King had given me! Though I reproached them for not speaking frankly in the Council room, I was grateful to them for having, at any rate, told me what they really thought.

I shall not describe in all its details my work at the Peace Conference. Nearly three months I spent there, and I consider them the best and happiest of my diplomatic career. King Carol, Queen Elizabeth (Carmen Sylva), the Government and the high Society of Rumania's capital were extremely kind to us, the delegates of Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey. It was then the season for balls, social gatherings and entertainments. Bulgaria's delegate, Ivan Gueshov, and myself, cherishing admiration for the British people and their ways, entered at once into friendly relations, but from the beginning it went against the grain to see a Turkish Pasha take the chair at our meetings. However, it was at the demand of the Serbian Government that a representative of the Sultan—the Suzerain of Bulgaria—accompanied Bulgaria's delegate to the Conference. King Milan told me so in Nish, and was pleased that thereby he had caused Bulgaria annoyance and humiliation.

"You have forgotten," I reminded his Majesty, "that your own representative would be annoyed and humiliated by a Turk presiding over the peace negotiations between Serbia and Bulgaria!" And so I felt always.

However, Madjid Pasha, notwithstanding his flat face and nose and dark complexion, speedily proved to be an intelligent, amiable and charming man. He was a poet,

and used every day to compose verses in Arabic, dedicated to various Society beauties. Gueshov and I could do many things, but neither of us could rhyme for the Rumanian ladies. And so our clever Arab poet put poor Gueshov and myself quite in the shade in the brilliant throng. But I revenged myself by telling everybody (including himself) that I allowed him to preside at the negotiations between me and Gueshov only because he was a poet and not because he was the representative of Bulgaria's Suzerain.

At my suggestion we agreed at our first meeting to invite Mr. Pherekyde, Rumania's Foreign Minister, to be our honorary President, and also requested the Rumanian Government to depute a diplomat to act as General Secretary. We were fortunate enough to secure the services of Mr. E. Lahovary, one of the ablest and most cultured of the younger diplomatists of Rumania, who since that time has rendered signal services to his country. Every delegate had his own secretary, mine being Mr. Zankovich, a Serb born in Dalmatia. Madjid Pasha's secretary was Réchid Bey, for whom I had very great sympathy, as he was grandson of the famous Mustapha Pasha, who, as the Sultan's Governor-General of Serbia, was so kind to the Serbians that, out of gratitude, they called him "the mother of the Serbian people." Twenty-seven years later I met Réchid Bey as Réchid Pasha and Turkey's delegate to the Peace Conference in London in the beginning of 1913.

I was doing my best to prolong negotiations and allow my Government time to complete their military preparations. Meanwhile Count Khevenhüller discovered, in Nish, what was the real intention of King Milan and his Government, and the Austro-Hungarian

Government invited the other Great Powers to exercise a certain pressure at Nish in order to make peace. Their representatives in Bucharest, therefore, put pressure on me to that end. This was not necessary, as I was honestly convinced that it was to the interest of my country to conclude peace. I can never forget the conversations I had then with the Italian Minister, Count Titoni, whose ability, knowledge of the circumstances, and sympathy with the Balkan nations impressed me immensely.

One day the efforts of the Great Powers to dissuade King Milan from renewing war were nearly frustrated. At the beginning of a sitting Madjid Pasha told me that the Bulgarian delegate had received instructions to present Bulgaria's conditions for the conclusion of peace. Mr. Gueshov passed to me across the table a white paper, foolscap size, folded in four. I opened it. My eyes at once caught the second article (I never knew what the first article contained), which declared that Serbia was to pay an indemnity of twenty-five million francs. I noticed there were several other articles, but I did not read any except that second one. For half a minute I sat staring at my friend Gueshov. Then I rose, stood as upright as I could, and spoke with the utmost gravity: "Monsieur le Délégué de la Bulgarie, I did not read all the articles reciting the Bulgarian conditions for peace. It was not necessary. It was sufficient that I read only the second article. Bulgaria has the boldness to demand that Serbia should pay her a war indemnity. My instructions are, that if Bulgaria make such a demand I am to declare, and I do now formally declare, these negotiations for peace at an end. I shall leave Bucharest within a few hours, and the war between Serbia and

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Bulgaria will be resumed to-morrow morning at six o'clock."

I bowed to the President, Madjid Pasha, who turned quite yellow and green; I bowed to Gueshov, who became paler than ever; and I then walked towards the door, followed by my secretary Zankovich. Unfortunately, or rather fortunately, the door was at some distance from where I sat, and much nearer to Madjid, who rushed to it and put his square, short body against it, spreading both his arms as if some invisible power had suddenly crucified him to the panels. Almost screaming with rage, he roared at poor Gueshov: "Have I not told you that it was foolish and risky? Do you see what you have done? Cher Monsieur Mijatovich, you are a good man, and a wise man, and a just man; stop a moment to consider. Are we to be denied the glory of restoring peace in the Balkans? Will you so lightheartedly resume the terrible conflict? Is there no way out of this situation?"

While he was shouting that appeal to me I looked at him and had pity on his painful agitation. And at that moment I remembered that that very morning the British Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Francis Sanderson, told me he had had a letter from his brother Sir Thomas, who sent his remembrances to me, adding that they all hoped I would succeed in making peace.

My own agitation had already subsided. I said: "My dear Madjid Pasha, out of respect for you personally, and wishing to share with you the honour of restoring peace between Serbia and Bulgaria, I will say at once that on one condition only can I resume my seat —Mr. Gueshov must withdraw his draft of the Bulgarian conditions for peace and let us consider them as 'comme

non avenues' ["not having been proposed"] and, further, that we are to hear no more of any war indemnity."

"Splendid!" cried Madjid. "I was sure you would find a way out of the dilemma. And Gueshov will accept your suggestion?"

Gueshov, who never moved from his chair, answered quietly: "Yes, Mr. Mijatovich, I withdraw my proposals, and we will consider them as never having been made."

I went back to my chair, returned the paper to Gueshov, and we shook hands as old friends. Madjid thanked me, and promised to dedicate to me his next poem in Arabic.

The scene produced a marked impression on our secretaries. Mr. Lahovary reported what happened to his Minister, who reported it to the King. His Majesty summoned me next day to the Palace and thanked me for not having irremediably destroyed the chances of peace, and Prince Alexander of Battenberg sent his private secretary with the message: "You have done a service not only to Serbia and Bulgaria, but to humanity."

I thanked God I had not been such a pedantic fool as to execute literally the instruction which my King, in peculiar circumstances, had given me. When I returned to Belgrade his Majesty remarked: "I ought to be angry with you, but I cannot."

I have only this to add: after considerable delay I was at last authorised to sign the treaty of peace, which consisted of but a single article:

"Peace is re-established between Serbia and Bulgaria!"

CHAPTER VI

Bucharest Reminiscences

BUCHAREST claims to be the Paris of the Near East. No doubt it has its boulevards, and its life, especially during the winter season, is very gay. In high Society French is the ordinary language. I was told that Rumanian ladies, if they ever pray, do so in French. A young poet was one day introduced to me who was visibly annoyed that I could imagine he wrote in the beautiful and musical Rumanian tongue.

"Oh, no, my dear sir," he said to me rather sharply, "I never write in the Rumanian language. My poetry is written in French."

I think that every man and woman in the higher ranks of the community was educated in France and lived for some time in Paris. They are educated men and women, familiar with contemporary French literature, but, after all, lacking the true French *esprit*.

Rumania has no aristocracy, but she has a class of proprietors of large landed estates which for generations have been in the possession of the same family. Men of that type are generally very wealthy and spend their money willingly and freely. They have a European reputation for being spendthrifts and leading somewhat extravagant and wild lives. About the middle of the nineteenth century Bucharest was considered a hotbed of gamblers and profligates. But the influence of King

Carol and Queen Elizabeth succeeded in purifying the social atmosphere of Rumania's capital. Almost every man and woman in Society acknowledged that fact with gratitude to their Majesties.

Yet—although I am not a prude—many things in Bucharest shocked me. I was introduced, as honorary member, to a most fashionable and almost aristocratically exclusive club. But when the members found that I did not smoke, drink, or play cards they did not conceal that they had a very poor opinion of me and my diplomatic abilities, and I soon learned that it was useless to visit that club.

On the second, or perhaps the third, day after my arrival as delegate to the Peace Conference, my valet informed me that a gentleman wished to see me for a few moments. On an elegant visiting-card I read a name which struck me as Spanish. When he came in I saw a tall, handsome man, most stylishly dressed. I offered him a seat, but he would not take it. He merely said: "I wished to have the honour to hand this sealed letter to your Excellency personally. If, when you have perused it at your leisure, you should wish my confidential services, you have my address on my card." He then bowed himself out. My first impression was that he was a private detective. I opened the letter, which exhaled a strong perfume of musk, and, to my horror, discovered that it contained a long list of names of "white slaves," young women of all nationalities, with their prices. The fashionably-dressed pander called upon the other delegates and their secretaries too.

At a ball I noticed a very pretty young lady flirting in a lively fashion with a middle-aged gentleman. I

asked my friend Kalyevich, the Serbian Minister in Bucharest, who she was. "Oh! that is Madame N——. That is the name of her third husband. The man she is flirting with was her first husband, but she divorced him. Her second husband is also here; I saw him a moment ago, and she will probably dance the next waltz with him."

At the Requiem service for the Tsar Alexander II. I noticed a very beautiful lady in mourning expressing her condolence with the Russian Minister, Prince Ouzousoff. Inquiring who she was, I was told she was the wife of a banker, who bought her from her first husband for a large sum of money, the husband then enabling his wife to get a divorce from him and marry the banker.

I made the acquaintance of a very pretty and, apparently, highly accomplished young Rumanian lady, who married an old but very wealthy man. She invited me one evening to her box in the theatre. A few other ladies and gentlemen were present with us. Some remark in the play caused one of the ladies to start, between the acts, a conversation on "platonic love." A lady, whose age might have been seventy, observed that, in her long experience, she had found no such thing as "platonic love."

"Ah! but," said my hostess, "there *is* 'platonic love,' and the men who generally begin with it know that it invariably leads to the other kind."

I met in Society a Civil Servant of very high standing and his wife, and became very friendly with them. They had both, contrary to the general rule, been educated in Germany. The lady could discourse interestingly on Hegel, Kant, and other German philosophers,

and was a great admirer of Schopenhauer. At the same time she had much of the French *esprit* in her, and, as she was also a typical dark-eyed Rumanian beauty, I rather enjoyed conversations with her.

One day I received, early in the morning, an invitation to come the same afternoon to her house. "It is true," she added, "I am not quite well, but that will justify my refusing other visitors, so that we may have an exhaustive discussion on Schopenhauer." Having been to her house before, I noticed, with some surprise, that the valet, showing me the way, passed the door of the drawing-room and led me to another door farther in the hall but still on the ground floor. Next moment, to my amazement, I found myself in the bedroom of the lady! She was sitting in bed, the silk quilt of which was covered with books and pamphlets.

I could not conceal my embarrassment, and told her that in England no lady would receive a man in her bedroom unless he were her husband or her medical attendant.

"Oh!" she cried out, "do not come to me with your English hypocrisies! Besides, don't you see, this is not a bedroom, but a combination of a bedroom and a boudoir. Come, take this chair near my bed, and if you are shocked to see in me a woman, forget the woman and see only a sexless philosopher."

Five minutes later her maid entered with black coffee for her and me. I had not finished sipping mine when the door bell rang in a peculiar fashion as if someone had given it three distinct pulls.

"Probably more visitors," I said.

"Oh, no," she answered. "It's my husband returning home."

"What will your husband say at finding me sitting here?"

"Even if he were to come in, he would only say that he was pleased to see you. But he will not come in. My husband has no right to enter my boudoir without my permission, and he has not got it for to-day." And I heard her husband passing the door and going upstairs.

These few incidents—which might be multiplied—show that the men and women of high position in Bucharest look on the social conventions from a different point of view from that obtaining in English society. They are more free, and even lax.

But while I mention these shadows in the picture of Bucharest *haut ton*, it is my pleasant duty to acknowledge that I have found plenty of sunshine there too. It was my good fortune to have several conversations with King Carol, and whenever I left him I carried away the impression of a superior man—not, indeed, a man of genius, nor even of brilliant gifts, yet a man of fine intellect and a good man, as well as a successful and experienced Sovereign. And what can I say of Queen Elizabeth? Other countries, great and small, had Empresses, Queens, and Sovereigns possessing admirable qualities and justly worthy of popularity and affection, but not one could vie with "Carmen Sylva" in the position she occupied in the hearts of the Rumanian people and in the public opinion of the civilised world. No wonder such a Queen was surrounded by a galaxy of virtuous, intellectual, and refined women of the highest culture and patriotism. To have frequent opportunities to talk with them, as well as with the Queen, was, indeed, "a liberal education" and an uplifting joy.

My own Sovereign, King Milan, was not exactly the model of a constitutional monarch. He was, no doubt, a man of brilliant intelligence, but, conscious of his brilliancy, he considered statesmen, politicians, and prominent men of all parties as rather dull and dense. He always thought he knew better than they, and, constitutionally or unconstitutionally, loved to impose his will on every other will, and not only to reign, but to govern too.

King Carol knew Milan's weakness, and repeatedly described to me not only the wisdom, but the beauty of a constitutional régime. He always added that he was not a doctrinaire and had no desire to teach me the theory of Constitutionalism, but that he spoke from his own experience. And he always finished by asking me to communicate to King Milan his brotherly advice to embark without fear on a truly constitutional rule. Often we spoke of the political situation in Europe. He did not hide from me his conviction that the independence of his people would be jeopardised were the ideal of the Panslavists—the absorption of all other Slav nations by Russia—to be realised. Rumania would then be a small Latin island surrounded by the Slav Sea.

On one occasion I took the liberty of asking Carol what was the secret of his remarkable success as King. He was a German by nationality, and his people were of Latin race, a restless people, accustomed to change their Sovereigns, so to speak, every seventh year.

"Oh!" quoth the King, "the secret of my success is very simple; patience, hard work, and faith in the intelligence, patriotism, and future of my Rumanian people."

Bucharest Reminiscences

Shall I ever forget my first dinner with Carmen Sylva? It was a great gala dinner at the Palace in honour of the delegates to the Peace Conference. I had the honour to sit on the right hand of her Majesty. Almost her first question was whether I had ever heard Dean Stanley preach in Westminster Abbey. I answered that, to my great regret, Dean Stanley had died before I went, as Minister, to London.

"Oh! what a loss for you! He was a splendid preacher—to me quite inspired. I shall never forget his first sermon. His text was: '*The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*'"

And then, to my surprise and joy, Carmen Sylva began to repeat Dean Stanley's sermon, or at any rate the more interesting parts of it. She spoke in her pleasant and musical voice, with an orator's diction, looking all the time straight into my eyes and letting mine look straight into her grey-blue eyes, and through them into her beautiful and wonderful soul. I was fascinated. My vision transformed her into an angel of God in silver-white robes, preaching for me amidst the solemn and mystic beauty of the interior of Westminster Abbey. Of course, we neither of us ate anything. When she had finished speaking my vision disappeared, and all the splendour of the palatial chamber and the glittering uniforms and orders of the guests looked poor, insignificant and cold.

"What do you think of it?" asked the Queen after a short silence.

"I thank your Majesty for the exquisite treat you have given me. As solemn music always does, your wonderful recollection of Dean Stanley's words brought visions of mystic beauty to my soul."

"Oh! you seem to be a mystic yourself. You must come and have a talk on mysticism."

"But, Madame, although I am a mystic, you must not be shocked by what I am now going to say to you. Dean Stanley's words are so wonderfully true in all senses that at this very moment my spirit is willing to enjoy the sacred food with which you so graciously fed me; but my weak flesh reminds me that I am in danger of rising from this Royal table quite hungry, as I have, so far, not had any physical food."

The Queen laughed heartily, and when the King, at the other side of the table, heard what was the matter, he laughed too, in his quiet, subdued way. But I very soon felt ashamed, and even to this day I feel ashamed, that I was led to play such a poor joke, quite unworthy of so rare—I may say unique—an incident as Carmen Sylva's recital of an inspiring sermon by Dean Stanley.

The Queen summoned me often to the Palace. We generally spoke on literature, and she showed herself a warm admirer of English poets and novelists, especially of the later Victorian period—Charles Dickens, Thackeray, etc. And she admired Bulwer Lytton's "Zanoni," and sent me, at my hotel, a copy of that novel to re-read, as I told her that it was years since I had read it.

We often spoke of spiritualism, in which she wholly believed. She told me that her mother, Princess of Wied, was a very great "psychic," and that she—Carmen Sylva—saw with her own eyes one day her mother being suddenly lifted up mysteriously and floating through the air along a corridor in Wied Palace.

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Queen Elizabeth—Carmen Sylva—was a rare woman, a real Queen. She was the first lady of the land, and the Rumanians were proud to have her for their first lady and their Queen.

But she would have been the last person to cause her brilliancy to outshine that of some of the Rumanian women around her. I met in Bucharest several women who, by their beauty or distinction, their culture and personal character, might have given lustre and done honour to the best Society in the world. They would not like me to mention them by name. But I must do so in the case of one of them. It is the sacred duty of my soul to do public homage to her personality, for I worship her always in my innermost heart. And why should I not worship her in the sight of her nation and my nation, in sight of the whole world?

Before I met her, and since I met her, I have become acquainted with many a noble woman. But I never met her superior.

Her name is Helen Bibesco, the wife of Prince George Bibesco. She was then (1886) the mother of two charming boys who now are, as men and patriots, doing honour to their mother and their country.

Prince Bibesco lived in the Grand Hôtel Boulevard, in which I had taken rooms. He introduced me to the Princess, and she introduced me to the French music of the eighteenth century. It was a new heaven into which she led me. She was an exquisite pianist, and instead of five-o'clock tea every afternoon she gave me some of her favourite French music. When later I told her that, listening to her music, I felt as if I were in a temple thronged with angels, behind whom the God of Mercy and Pity and Purity was enthroned, she said: "I am

not surprised. I learned philosophy in Germany; I learned true science in England; but French music and French poetry opened the seventh heaven to me!"

We soon found that we both had several loves in common. We both were old-fashioned idealists. I discovered that when she showed me her published poems and prose writings. She was, indeed, the most gifted woman I ever met. And so beautiful too; a special type of the Rumanian, or rather Latin beauty, a fine oblong face, warm complexion and dark eyes, with the soft light of a passion for holiness in them. She never preached to me, except perhaps on one occasion, when —seeing me at a ball laughing (probably flirting!) with some ladies—she said to me: "Your nation entrusted you with an important mission of peace. To accomplish it, you ought to walk in touch with God. You ought to be far above flirtation and frivolity."

And indeed I *was* in touch with God through the pure soul of that truly noble woman. She became my guardian angel whilst I was moving in the lascivious atmosphere of Bucharest. I never did a greater work in my life, and if I did it well—and in all modesty I think I did it well—it was under the inspiration of the pure friendship of the noblest and best of women, an accomplished artist and true poetess, my unforgettable friend, Princess Helen Bibesco, whose memory I always cherish in my heart of hearts and bless with the sincerest gratitude in the depths of my soul.

Nor can I close this chapter on my Bucharest remembrances without mentioning how much I owed to the friendly support of Sir Francis Sanderson, in charge of the British Legation at Bucharest, in the then absence

of Sir William White in Constantinople (1886). He gave me valuable political support and advice, encouraging me to promote peace, as already narrated. But Mr. Sanderson did more than afford me the benefit of his political counsel. A few days after my arrival in Bucharest, and after I became personally acquainted with him, he came to my room, carrying a huge bear-skin overcoat. He said to me: "Lord Salisbury recommended you to my care and service. I noticed you were driving about the town in your winter overcoat, which is no doubt quite sufficient for London, but quite useless in Bucharest with its Russian winter. So I have brought this one for use during your stay here, and it will prevent your catching cold."

I thanked him heartily, but declined to avail myself of his kindness. Mr. Sanderson, however, persisted. "Lord Salisbury has recommended you to my care, and I could not better comply with his instructions than by preventing you from catching cold. You *must* use my travelling overcoat." Of course, there was nothing more to be said, and I remained quite warm and comfortable all the time I was in snow-covered, icy Bucharest.

One Saturday morning Mr. Sanderson called early. "What are you doing this evening?" he asked me.

"Well, after dinner I am going to Madame Pherekyde's ball"—the lady being the wife of the Rumanian Foreign Minister.

"I know that, as I have been invited too, but I have excused myself. To-morrow will be Sunday, and it will be better for you to rest to-night and go to church to-morrow. In fact, I have come to ask you to accompany me to the church of the British Mission

to the Jews, which is in the middle of the Jewish quarter."

"You know, Mr. Sanderson," I said, "all diplomacy is nothing but compromise. I suggest that you let me go this evening to the ball, and I will let you take me to-morrow to the church." And Mr. Sanderson accepted that compromise.

I remember Madame Pherekyde's ball more especially because of an incident which made some sensation in Society and diplomatic circles. I noticed a tall, middle-aged lady, looking not exactly handsome, but the very personification of distinction. When I ascertained that she was Princess Sarka Karageorgevich I requested my amiable hostess to do me the honour of introducing me. Princess Karageorgevich was agreeably surprised that the delegate of Serbia, well known to be a personal friend of King Milan, should ask to pay her his respects, as she belonged to the dynasty of the pretender to the Serbian throne. Amongst the onlookers were also Princess Gregor Ghica, the sister of Queen Nathalie, and General Catargi, uncle of King Milan. Some of my diplomatic colleagues asked what King Milan would say to my public homage to the Princess Karageorgevich.

"King Milan knows me," I answered, "and he will understand that I could not publicly ignore the woman who bears one of the most illustrious names in Serbia's modern history, and who is, besides, the daughter of the patriotic Misha Anastassiyevich, who gave his palace in Belgrade to be used as the High School [now University]." In fact, King Milan never uttered a word of reproach for my courtesy to Princess Sarka Karageorgevich.

I return now to my friend Mr. Sanderson. He

came next morning early enough, and we drove to the Jewish quarter and to the Mission Church, which we found filled with partially converted Jews. When we took our places in front of them Mr. Sanderson said to me, "By the by, you will have to read the first lesson. I will tell you when you must step up to the pulpit."

"Surely," I exclaimed in alarm, "Lord Salisbury did not instruct you to make me read the first lesson to half-converted Jews?"

"Well," Mr. Sanderson answered, "Lord Salisbury recommended you to my care and courtesy, and we cannot offer you a greater courtesy than to ask you to read to us one of the epistles of St. Paul."

I thanked him very much for the honour, of which I thought I was unworthy, and with difficulty induced him to let me listen to his own reading of the first lesson.

Mr. Sanderson was extremely kind, and displayed much care not only for my material, but also for my spiritual welfare.

Lord Salisbury was quite capable of requesting Mr. Sanderson to pay due regard to my comfort and well-being, or of asking Sir Thomas Sanderson to write to his brother to this purpose. He would rarely deny himself the pleasure of a little joke, sometimes sarcastic, sometimes even somewhat cynical, at my expense. On one occasion I appealed to him for diplomatic support and moral sympathy on behalf of Serbia.

"I assure you, my dear Minister," Lord Salisbury said, "that Serbia always has our sympathy. And in future you will always have our moral support and sympathy, provided you do not expect us to fight for

you against Austria or Turkey, and provided you do not expect us to lend you money!" And yet Providence has brought about the day on which the British Empire is fighting both Austria and Turkey for us, and is lending us money to carry on a war in which we fight not only for our own, but also for British interests.

On another occasion I complained that the British Press took little interest in the Serb people. I thought we deserved better treatment, considering the self-sacrificing services we had rendered to Christian civilisation in the past.

"That is just it," said Lord Salisbury, smiling. "We in this country know so little about these services. You ought to lighten our darkness!"

I then told him how we had fought for nearly a hundred years to stem the Mahommedan invasion of Europe, and how, for four hundred years, we had never ceased our guerilla war against the Turks for our own liberty. I thought our brilliant history entitled us to look to the British people for some sympathy and support.

"I am much obliged to you," observed Lord Salisbury, "for telling me something I did not know. I see now you have had really an illustrious history. But, my dear Minister, permit me to say this: it would have been better for you to have had a less dazzling history and, in its place, a port on the Adriatic, to which British merchants could bring their goods for sale."

He laughed heartily. I kept my countenance and rejoined: "Your Lordship is perfectly right. And that is just why we hope you will help us to get a port on the Adriatic!"

CHAPTER VII

Sultan Abdul Hamid

IN 1900 I was transferred from London to Constantinople as Serbia's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Sultan Abdul Hamid.

I was very sorry to leave London, where in diplomatic, political, and social circles everybody had been most kind; but I soon found some compensation in the importance of the political work which awaited me in Constantinople. The picturesqueness of Stamboul and the beauties of the Bosphorus gave great joy to my artistic instincts, for although I was no artist in the strict sense of the word, I was born with a keen æsthetic sense, and only missed my true vocation by losing myself in the jungle of politics, fortunately emerging at last into the charming groves of diplomacy, in which there is room for fine art of a special kind.

For Serbia there was no more important diplomatic post in the world than Constantinople. By the initiative of her own people she had risen in 1804, under the leadership of Karageorge, in insurrection against Turkish rule, and won, under Milosh Obrenovich (after 1813), her own autonomy by her own efforts in 1817, being the first Balkan country to "make good." Of course, we Serbs never forget our debts of gratitude to Russia, which, in the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829, placed our autonomy under the safeguard of an international Treaty.

Realising that the Serbs of Serbia were only a smaller

part of the Serb nation, we realised also that it was our duty to work for the liberation of all other Serbs living under the direct rule of Turkey and Austria-Hungary. Conscious of that duty, we never ceased, either openly or secretly, to be at war with Turkey. That fact made the position of Serbian Minister in Constantinople not only very responsible, but also very delicate and difficult. During my stay in the true capital of the Balkan Peninsula my task was rendered the more delicate and more difficult in that it was complicated by the maintenance of our national interests against the Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia. I remember always with sincere gratitude that the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, Mr. Zinovieff, often gave me his powerful support in all questions which lay outside the conflict of Serbian and Bulgarian interests. This was especially the case during my negotiations with the Porte for the conclusion of a treaty of commerce between Serbia and Turkey.

In Constantinople I met many interesting men. But the most interesting of them all was Sultan Abdul Hamid, not because he was Sultan, but because he was somewhat a fascinating personality apart from his position. I know well that he was far from popular in England, that the massacre of the Armenians in Constantinople in 1892 was attributed to his own orders, and that he was accused of abandoning the traditional Anglophile policy of Turkey and replacing it by a Germanophile policy. The latter accusation was well founded. But I cannot honestly say as much of the former, although I have met several well-informed diplomats who were in Constantinople during the massacres and who were inclined to believe that the signal came from the Yildiz Kiosk, the Palace in which Abdul

Hamid resided. I saw Abdul Hamid fairly often and had prolonged conversations with him, but I never once gained the impression that I was talking to a blood-thirsty monster. On the contrary, he appeared to me always a kind-hearted, God-fearing, quiet, patient man, loving music, poetry, and philosophy. It is true I found him also—and that to my own cost—a sly and slimy Oriental diplomatist, very difficult to be dealt with by modern European methods.

I happened to win the Sultan's good graces when, in presenting the accrediting letter from my Sovereign, I expressed my belief that his Majesty, following the example of his ancestors, the former Sultans, who always tried to do justice, would deal equitably with the Serbs under his sceptre. On a later occasion he told me that he was pleased to hear a foreign diplomatist speak reasonably of his forefathers.

"We Turks know," he remarked, "that all our Sultans have tried to do justice, but you are the first foreign diplomatist who has acknowledged that fact!"

"That is," I answered, "because I am not only a diplomatist, but also something of a historian, and I can prove my statement to be an historical fact!"

How shrewd Abdul Hamid could be I had a hint of from King Milan. King Milan abdicated in February, 1889. He, who so far had been an atheist, was seized suddenly—and to me, as one of his intimate friends, quite inexplicably—with the idea of spending Easter in Jerusalem. On his return, speaking to me of the Sultan, he said: "I will show you what a clever diplomatist and generous man Abdul Hamid is. On my way to Jerusalem I had to pass through Constantinople and, of course, was bound to visit the Sultan. As his vassal

I had rebelled twice against him, my Suzerain, and really provoked Russia's attack on Turkey in 1876, so I wondered what my reception would be. I expected him to be formal and cold. I knew I had no right to anticipate more than bare indispensable courtesy. Judge of my surprise to find Sultan Abdul Hamid waiting for me on the threshold of the Yildiz Kiosk and greeting me with this most unexpected speech: 'I receive with pleasure under my roof the man who has re-established Serbia in her ancient dignity as a Kingdom. We know well how much the Serbs contributed in old times to the greatness and glory of the Ottoman Empire! So I greet you as a Sovereign who has done his duty to his people!' I was moved almost to tears by those generous words. I understood him practically to say: 'Yes, you rebelled twice against me, but you did it conceiving it to be your duty to your people!'" King Milan appeared touched even while relating the incident to me.

I once saw Abdul Hamid in a fine philosophical mood. On the day on which I received King Alexander's telegram announcing his engagement to Madame Draga Mashin, the Sultan, late in the evening, sent an aide-de-camp with a royal carriage to convey me to his presence in Yildiz Kiosk. There he inquired whether I had obtained more details about the engagement of my King; whether I personally knew Madame Mashin; and whether it were true that she was older, and, if so, how many years older than the King. I told him that I knew her when, as Mademoiselle Lunyevitsa, she married my own Secretary (of the mining department of the Ministry of Finance), Svetozar Mashin, and that she must be eight or nine years the King's senior. When he heard that I

had a good photograph of her at the Legation, he asked me to fetch it at once. When I handed it to him he gazed upon it for a minute or two, and then said: "Yes, she seems to have beautiful eyes. But it is clear that she is not very young. I wonder what strange folly has seized your King. When he came to visit me two or three years ago he seemed an intelligent young man and won all my sympathy. But where is his intelligence now? Oh, it seems to be folly!"

I ventured to say: "I cannot explain it, much less defend it, for the King himself told me, only three months ago, that he was to go in June with his father to see a young, beautiful, and highly cultured German Princess, in order to become engaged to her."

"Strange! Strange!" the Sultan muttered, and then fell silent as though lost in thought. After two or three minutes he suddenly rose from the sofa, brushed his forehead with his left hand, pushed his fez slightly back on his head, and observed:

"But, after all, Monsieur le Ministre, what right have we to criticise the action of the young King of Serbia? Do we not know that even men of ripe age, great experience, and strong will are poor and helpless creatures when in the company of the woman they love? Certainly we have no right to be astonished or to find fault with Alexander. Therefore, Monsieur le Ministre, do not report to your King any of my earlier utterances, but wire that I had summoned you to express my congratulations and best wishes for his happiness with the wife of his choice!"

I was surprised and pleased with that bit of philosophy about the weakness of even the strongest man when in love.

On another occasion Sultan Abdul Hamid spoke more as philosopher than as potentate.

King Alexander, having mortally offended his father by his marriage with Madame Draga Mashin, and by the drastic measures he took to prevent King Milan's return to Serbia, was uneasy because the latter lived in Austria, from which he could at any time foment a movement against him (Alexander) and Queen Draga. He had a remarkable knack of inventing original methods for dealing with difficulties and dangers. Anxious to induce his father to leave Vienna for a place where he would be virtually interned, never quitting it save in his coffin, he conceived the idea of asking Abdul Hamid to invite Milan to reside in Constantinople permanently, or even temporarily, detaining him there all the same, and rendering thereby a great service to him (King Alexander) personally as well as to Serbia.

He sent his first aide-de-camp, General Lazar Petrovich, on a secret mission to the Sultan. The General, a very sympathetic and courtly man and my personal friend, begged me to procure for him a private audience with the Sultan. He added that as his mission was strictly secret, he was instructed by the King to speak with the Sultan alone and without my presence. I did as I was requested, but immediately wired my resignation to the King. Alexander sent me a flattering telegram and requested General Petrovich to use his best efforts to soothe my sensitiveness. But very soon after the General had his private interview with the Sultan I managed to find out the true object of the secret mission, and a very few days after the General left, the Sultan indirectly confirmed what I had been informed.

It fell out thus: The Sultan invited me to see him

for a confidential conversation, and, therefore, I was not to bring my interpreter with me as Ibrahim Pasha would be equal to all requirements.

"I understand," said the Sultan, "that you are an intimate friend of King Milan, who often follows your advice."

I told him that I could hardly pretend to intimate friendship, but that I was devoted to him and that he treated me as a friend, although he seldom accepted my advice.

"I congratulate you on enjoying the friendship of such a brilliant man," the Sultan continued. "I myself have been impressed by his personality and was happy to notice that he responded to my friendly sentiments. I have a high opinion of his political experience and knowledge of the world as well as of his moral courage and generous heart. Now, you will not be surprised to hear that I am longing to have such a friend near me! I am frequently tired of the heavy responsibility I bear, and I have nowhere to turn for a refreshing rest, for a philosophical chat, for an inspiring exchange of ideas. Thank God, I have many able and devoted and faithful servants, but I can hardly say that I have disinterested friends. And I need—and, oh! I am longing for—such a friend. Milan, as I have learned to know him, would be an ideal friend. Write to him, try, as his devoted friend, to induce him to come to me as my guest and friend; tell him I want his friendship more than that of any other man; tell him I leave it to him to choose which of my palaces on the Bosphorus he would prefer to live in, and that I will treat him as my best and most trusted friend; that all I ask of him is his friendship, that he should come and see me from time to time so

that I might have the benefit of his knowledge of European politics, and that we both, having known the splendour of thrones, could humbly, before God, talk as true philosophers of the vanities of the world and the emptiness of glory!"

Abdul Hamid usually conversed calmly, in measured sentences, without emotion. But on this occasion he spoke as if deeply moved, with increasing warmth and simple eloquence. Of course, the impression his statements made on me was almost *nil*, because I knew the object of General Petrovich's mission. I assured his Majesty that I was certain that King Milan had a great admiration for him, and would be highly honoured by and happy in his Majesty's friendship. I promised to report to the King his Majesty's generous sentiments. And I did so.

I have published an account of this special audience with the Sultan in a book on Constantinople which I wrote in Serbia. But now for the first time I have related what I knew about General Petrovich's secret mission to the Sultan.

And here is an example of Abdul Hamid's Oriental diplomacy.

I have already mentioned the clashing of Serbian and Bulgarian interests in Macedonia. We succeeded, vastly to the annoyance of the Bulgar Exarchate in Constantinople, in obtaining the election of a Serb (Archimandrite Firmilian) to the Archbishopric of Uskub (in Upper Macedonia). The election by the Greek Synod was not of much value without the formal consecration of the elected Archbishop, and this could not be performed without the formal sanction of the Porte. We won the election, but Bulgar

influences prevailed with the Porte to adjourn indefinitely the granting of the permission for the consecration of the elected Archbishop, who could not do anything without being consecrated. One of my first tasks in Constantinople was to obtain permission from the Porte for the consecration of the Serb Archimandrite Firmilian as Archbishop of Uskub.

I began my task by calling on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and drawing his attention to the fact that the elected Archbishop of Uskub had waited for two years for his consecration, to the immense inconvenience of the churches and flocks of that diocese. Tewfik Pasha, the most amiable of Foreign Ministers, expressed regret that he could not do anything for me, as the question was entirely within the powers of the Minister for Evkafs (pious foundations) and Church Affairs, to whom he referred me.

As most of the Ministers are under the same roof at the Sublime Porte, I went straightway to the Minister of Evkafs. Again the Minister—a most polite Turk and a very handsome man too—ordered a cup of black coffee to be brought and offered me cigarettes. When I told him the object of my visit he sighed deeply.

"Of course, I knew what you wanted the moment I saw you. Your predecessor came at least twenty times on the same errand. But the fact is, that though the consecration of the elected Archbishop of Uskub ought to be in my hands, it isn't. How often have I protested in vain against that infraction! The Grand Vizier always mysteriously hints at reasons of State which block the way and advises me to have patience for a while. I think your Firmilian ought to be consecrated, and if I had full control of my own department

he would be consecrated to-morrow, but I tell you frankly my hands are bound. All I can advise you to do is to see the Grand Vizier."

I went to the Grand Vizier, a fine old Turk, who received me with the utmost cordiality, ordered coffee and cigarettes, spoke of the beauty of the Bosphorus, of his friendly disposition towards the Serbs, and at last allowed me to tell him why I had come. After listening quietly to my arguments as to the urgency of a speedy consecration of the elected Archbishop of Uskub, he said:

"Your arguments are unanswerable. You are entirely in the right. I can even understand that you are at the end of your patience. I should feel delighted and happy if I could oblige you by informing the Patriarch that he could at once proceed. But I cannot do it, to my sincere regret, for the matter rests entirely with his Majesty. Ask for an audience with the Sultan, and I wish you every success."

I drove from the Sublime Porte direct to Yildiz Kiosk to see Tahsin Pasha, the famous private secretary of the Sultan. He had a peculiar method of doing business. He worked in a large room which was at the same time the waiting-room for visitors. On both sides were placed sofas and chairs for the callers. He sat at his writing-desk, receiving one after the other, and, in whispers, asked each what brought him, the visitor also replying *sotto voce*. He then made a few notes on the paper before him, quietly dismissed the caller, and, nodding, gave the sign to the next to approach for another whispered entertainment. All this took place in the presence of several others, waiting for their turn.

I entered the room while a caller was whispering to

him, and had to wait only a minute or two until he had finished. Tahsin immediately rose to shake hands with me, and I whispered: "I wish to have the honour of an audience with his Majesty."

"May I ask on what subject you wish to speak to his Majesty?"

"To request his Majesty graciously to give the necessary orders that the elected Archbishop of Uskub, Firmilian, should be at once consecrated."

Tahsin made some notes on a large sheet lying on his desk, and then shaking hands again whispered: "I will submit your Excellency's request to his Majesty this very evening." And I left.

This was on a Monday. Knowing well that the constitutional weakness of the Turks was procrastination, I did not expect an answer from the Palace till near the end of the week. I was therefore greatly (and pleasantly) surprised when the very next morning a special messenger brought me a letter from Tahsin Pasha informing me that his Majesty would receive me next Friday after the Selamlik—that is to say, in three days. I had been told by some of my colleagues of the Diplomatic Corps that it was rather difficult to secure an audience with the Sultan. So I considered his readiness to receive me so soon an augury of my success, besides being very flattering to me personally. I reported this initial favour to my Government, and also wrote to Firmilian that on the following Friday I intended to try to induce the Sultan to give orders for his consecration.

Yildiz Kiosk, with its extensive gardens, lies on the eastern declivity of a hill. A few hundred yards below the gate of the Palace stands a simple house of one storey, with a row of windows on the first floor looking

on the sloping road by which the Sultan drives down to the mosque, a few hundred yards lower on the left side of the road. The house in question was reserved for Ambassadors, Ministers, their wives, and exceptionally distinguished foreigners.

On that Friday I went early to the Ambassadors' Kiosk and took a place at one of the windows not only to see the Sultan better, but also to be better seen by him. Presently, driving slowly in an open victoria, the Sultan appeared, somewhat languidly raised his eyes towards the windows, and answered my deep bow by a Turkish salaam with his white-gloved right hand. We all followed him with our eyes, as we also did the crowd of Pashas and high officers walking in front of and surrounding his carriage.

Not five minutes after the Sultan had entered the mosque little Emin Bey, one of the Sultan's chamberlains, came into the room in which, besides myself, were several Ambassadors and some ladies of the Diplomatic Corps. Emin Bey spoke first with the Ambassadors and then came to me, bowing and smiling.

"His Majesty sent me to give you his Imperial greeting and to ask after your Excellency's health."

"Thank you," I answered. "As you see, my health is pretty good."

"And his Majesty wished to know how your wife was. I do not see her Excellency here," Emin Bey went on.

"No," I explained, "I did not bring my wife, as I am to have an audience of his Majesty to-day."

Emin Bey began to rub his hands as if they had suddenly become cold, and looked down on his new shining shoes.

"Yes. His Majesty ordered me to tell your Excellency that he anticipated the pleasure of seeing you to-day in the Palace after the Selamlik, but just when he was leaving the Palace his sister arrived. As he could not see her there and then, he must see her on his return. And his Majesty added: 'I am sure Monsieur Mijatovich knows what we owe to the ladies and will excuse my unfortunate inability to receive him to-day, but next Friday I hope to see him for certain.'"

"I understand," I said in the innocence of my Western mind. "I am pleased to see his Majesty so full of consideration for the Princess. Among the Serbs a sister occupies quite an exceptional position in men's respect and consideration."

Poor Emin began to smile again, as his hands evidently ceased to be cold.

"What you say is very nice, and I am sure his Majesty will be pleased to hear it."

Next Friday I came again to the Ambassadors' Kiosk early enough to secure a good position at one of the windows. The Sultan, looking grave and sad, passed in his carriage, raised his eyes, saw me and answered my bow rather lackadaisically. In a few minutes amiable Emin Bey appeared.

"His Majesty sent me to give to your Excellency his Imperial greeting and to inquire after your health and the health of her Excellency, your wife. I do not see her here!"

"Thank you, I am well, and my wife also, but I did not bring her as I am to have the honour of an audience with his Majesty."

Emin's hands grew very cold, for he rubbed them slowly and silently and then spoke:

"I am aware of that. His Majesty ordered me to deliver to your Excellency the following message: 'Just when I was leaving the Palace a lengthy dispatch arrived from our Ambassador in Paris, which I must decipher myself, and I shall not be able, to my real regret, to receive the Serbian Minister to-day, but hope to do so next Friday.'"

"Well, of course," I said, "I understand, and I can only admire his Majesty's devotion to his official duties. Next Friday I hope to have the honour of being received."

"Oh, certainly, certainly!" cried Emin Bey as, warmed by my good-natured and stupid reply, he ceased to wash his hands with invisible soap in invisible water.

On the third Friday I called again. The Sultan passed as usual, and Emin Bey interviewed me once more with wonted amiability.

"His Majesty saw you at the window—indeed, was pleased to see you—and sent me, with his Imperial salutation, to ask how you were and how her Excellency is, whom I have not the pleasure of seeing here."

"I did not bring my wife as I am to have the honour of being received by his Majesty." I repeated my answer of the two previous Fridays.

"Certainly—exactly!" said Emin, examining his shoes with fresh interest and rubbing his hands slowly. "His Majesty ordered me to tell your Excellency that he looked forward almost with impatience to the pleasure of receiving you, more especially as his Majesty wished to ask you for some information. Unfortunately, and to his Majesty's profound regret, a communication came early this morning from the German Ambassador, Marschall von Bieberstein, that he had been summoned

to Berlin, for which he leaves to-morrow morning, and that he must see his Majesty to-day. His Majesty added: 'Mr. Mijatovich knows that Marschall von Bieberstein has a habit of remaining sometimes a whole hour and even longer, and I do not wish to keep him waiting until the German Ambassador has finished. Better let him come next Friday.' "

This was now too much for a good-natured, patient and foolish fellow.

"Look, now, Emin Bey. You know, and his Majesty knows, that this is the third Friday that I have, at his Majesty's orders, come for an audience and have not been received. Please tell his Majesty that I will come again next Friday, the fourth Friday, but if I shall not be received then I will go back from this room to my Legation, pack up my things and leave Constantinople without saying 'Good-bye' to anyone."

"Oh, my dear Excellency," said Emin in subdued tones, not untouched with alarm, genuine or affected, "you must not take such an extreme view of an unintentional incident. I assure you his Majesty has much personal sympathy with you and wishes to see you. His Majesty will look forward to that pleasure next Friday."

And on the fourth Friday Emin Bey came smilingly to take me from the Ambassadors' Kiosk through a connecting corridor to the Palace, and handed me over to Ibrahim Pasha, the Sultan's principal interpreter, who escorted me and my interpreter, the learned Armenian Samardji, into a small room where the Sultan was waiting for us. It is a rule that foreign Ambassadors and Ministers should bring their own interpreters with them. Sultan Abdul Hamid understands French,

but does not speak it. He speaks in Turkish and his interpreter translates, phrase after phrase, into French, my interpreter checking the accuracy of the translation. It would have been correct if my interpreter had translated into Turkish what I said in French, but on this special audience Ibrahim Pasha was translating not only what the Sultan said, but also my own answers to the Sultan, my interpreter merely verifying the translation.

After the customary salutations the Sultan sat down on a small sofa, whilst, at his invitation, I took an armchair opposite to him. I drew out of my breast pocket the notebook in which I had jotted certain memoranda about the case of the Right Reverend Archbishop-elect of Uskub and began: "Your Majesty will graciously allow me——" I had not proceeded farther when the Sultan raised his right hand, muttering something in Turkish which Ibrahim Pasha immediately translated. "His Majesty wishes you to stop, as he has some questions to put to you. And the first is: How long have you been Minister in London?"

"I have been for nearly seven years Serbian Minister at the Court of St. James's."

"Then you must know English society very well?"

"I have had ample opportunity."

"What do you think, then, of English women?"

This seemed such an odd question that I turned to my interpreter and asked in a whisper whether it had been correctly translated. Mr. Samardji confirmed its accuracy.

"Well," I said to the Sultan, "I do not know in what sense your Majesty puts that question, but I know that English women are beautiful and healthy, good mothers, faithful wives, reliable friends."

"Yes, I remember seeing some beautiful women when I was there."

"Has your Majesty ever been in England? I did not know that."

"Oh, yes," the Sultan answered. "I was there with my elder brother Murad, accompanying our uncle Abdul Aziz when he went to visit Queen Victoria."

And the Sultan told me what follows, which I have tried to reproduce in his own words, for, on my return from the Palace, I wrote down all he said.

"When we arrived in London a tall, handsome, martial-looking colonel was attached to us as aide-de-camp. After he was presented he went out for a moment, but immediately returned with a bottle and two glasses. 'Your Imperial Highnesses, I am Scottish by nationality, and am proud that Scotland, among many other virtuous and good things, also produces excellent whisky. I wish your Imperial Highnesses would honour my country and myself by tasting Scotch whisky!' Murad answered: 'Perhaps you are not aware that our Prophet prohibits the drinking of alcoholic liquor. We thank you, Colonel, but we cannot taste spirits!' 'Oh, but your Prophet did not know what Scotch whisky was, and, surely, he did not expressly prohibit *that* whisky!' urged the Colonel. But we firmly resisted all his attempts to induce us to taste. At last the Colonel said: 'I am sorry you refuse to be acquainted with a beverage so excellent and so necessary for health in our climate. May I hope that your Imperial Highnesses will not object to my drinking?' 'Certainly not, Colonel,' replied my brother. 'Your religion does not forbid your drinking alcoholic liquor, so you can take as much of your Scotch whisky as you like.'

"But in a few days we found that our Colonel drank whisky at all times, although this did not interfere in the slightest degree with the perfect fulfilment of his duties. One evening my brother, a good and conscientious man, remarked to me: 'Do you think we are acting properly when, being friends of the Colonel, who is a friend to us, we do not draw his attention to the fact that he drinks too much whisky?' We discussed the matter for some time, and came to the conclusion that it was our duty to speak to him about it. So next morning, when the Colonel was lunching with us and helping himself plentifully to whisky, my brother observed to him: 'Colonel, we know you are our friend, and we hope you know that we are your friends. Now, as friends, we venture to suggest that you drink rather too much Scotch whisky!' The Colonel fell back in his chair, stared in astonishment first at my brother and then at me, then again at my brother, and at last said: 'What! Your Imperial Highnesses think I drink too much whisky! I wonder what you'd say if you saw how much my wife drinks!'

"Now, Mr. Mijatovich," the Sultan ended, "what I want to hear from you, who have been so long in England, is this: Is it true that English women drink much alcohol?"

I answered: "Most emphatically I can assure your Majesty that it is not true! One may sometimes see a woman of the labouring class the worse for drink, but certainly never a woman of the middle or the higher classes!"

"I am glad you confirm by practical knowledge my own conclusions. Whenever I see those fine Englishmen, so tall, well developed, and handsome, I say to

myself: 'It is not possible that the mothers of this virile race drink Scotch whisky to excess!"

Then the Sultan said he had read much about England, and thought that English women must have been handsomer in the old times than they are now, because a Pope, seeing them, asked who they were, and when told they were English, exclaimed: "*You are not English, but Angelic!*"

I seized my opportunity, but you may be sure I did not deem it politic to rectify the Sultan's history.

"I am grateful your Majesty mentioned the angels, as they remind me of my Archbishop-elect of Uskub who ought to be consecrated!"

"My dear Minister," the Sultan said, rising from his sofa, "surely you won't speak to me of a monk after we have had a pleasant talk about English women! Moreover, Firmilian's affair is not ripe for solution. When it matures I will send for you and then we will talk about monks. *Bon jour!*"

He extended his white-gloved right hand and left the room.

After waiting four weeks for the promised audience I had at last obtained it; but instead of discussing the consecration of an archbishop, Abdul Hamid whiled away the time with a story about Scotch whisky and gossip about English women. My diplomatic effort was a complete fiasco. But I could not help laughing at my own defeat. Abdul Hamid was too sly and cunning for my honest diplomacy.

It is well known that Abdul Hamid had a theatre erected in the European style in the grounds of Yildiz

Kiosk. It was almost adjacent to the palace in which the Sultan lives, and the two structures are connected by a long gallery. I have an impression that the theatre stands between the Sultan's palace and the palace in which his harem is placed, as the ladies of the harem go from time to time to hear Italian or French opera.

At the invitation of the Sultan certain impresarii every summer bring an opera company to Yildiz, generally an Italian one. As a rule the audience consists only of the Sultan and a few of his aides-de-camp who happen to be on duty. Sometimes, however, his Majesty invites a few Ambassadors or Ministers whom he specially desires to honour.

One day I received an invitation to dine at the Palace and afterwards join his Majesty in the Imperial box at the Yildiz Opera House. There I found the Russian Ambassador Zinovieff and the Persian Minister Ali Mirza Khan. After the dinner—which I always thought rather a poor affair in the Sultan's palace—we were taken by Ibrahim Pasha to a salon where, in the course of a quarter of an hour, the Sultan appeared. His Majesty wished to do us the honour of conducting us personally to his opera house.

We passed through several sumptuously furnished rooms, and then entered a long but not very broad corridor which, to my astonishment, proved to be a picture gallery. I say to my astonishment, because I knew that orthodox Mahommedans do not like pictures. I noticed that all the paintings represented battles of the Turkish army. Zinovieff walked on the Sultan's left, I was behind the Sultan, and Mirza Khan followed Zinovieff. Suddenly the Sultan stopped, turned towards

me, and, without saying a word, pointed out to me a large oil painting on the right side of him.

Ibrahim Pasha whispered to me, "The Battle of Alexinatz!"

Glancing at the picture, I saw that the Turkish soldiers were represented as in pursuit of the retreating Serbians (1876).

Thereupon I said aloud to Ibrahim, "Please tell his Majesty we also have that battle painted in oils, but composed somewhat differently!"

Abdul Hamid seized my thought at once and laughed heartily. I thought him really a "jolly good fellow."

The Imperial box occupied the place of the dress circle in English theatres. To left and right of it were several boxes. The theatre was large enough, but very simply and modestly decorated. Except the Sultan, his three guests and Ibrahim Pasha in the Imperial box, and three or four aides-de-camp in the box next to it, the house was absolutely empty. An Italian company was playing *Fra Diavolo* with very good singers but very poor scenery. The Sultan seemed to like the music and was entirely absorbed by what was going on on the stage. But when the girl Marianna, after praying to the Virgin, began to undress for bed, his Majesty, apparently in alarm, turned to Zinovieff and said: "Your Excellency knows the habits of European girls, and therefore I wish to learn whether that girl on the stage will undress herself entirely."

Zinovieff, with a twinkle in his eye, answered: "Such girls consult the taste of their patrons, and as your Majesty is the patron of this company no doubt she will consult your Majesty's taste."

Abdul Hamid raised his white-gloved right hand, shook his head, and said something that sounded like "*Ustafer Allah!*" ("God forbid!").

As he did not applaud, of course no one applauded the singers; but, at the end, he sent Ibrahim Pasha to convey his Imperial compliments to the actors and actresses.

CHAPTER VIII

King Milan

MILAN OBRENOVICH was called to the throne of Serbia after the assassination of his childless uncle, Prince Michael (Obrenovich III.), on June 10th, 1868. Milan was then in his fourteenth year and had only begun his studies under Professor François Huet, a famous French philosopher, in whose house he lived. Throughout his career as reigning Prince and King he always gratefully remembered his teacher and spoke of Madame Huet with tender affection. When Prince Michael asked Professor Huet what would be his programme for the education of Milan, he was told: "My idea is to educate your nephew as if he were my own son!"

"I do not ask for anything better," Prince Michael replied, giving his hand to the Professor. "Take the boy with you!" The Professor was well known as a freethinker and democrat.

Unfortunately, the young Prince had not been more than a year with the Professor when he became a ruler. Often afterwards I heard him say to Serbian politicians, "I know I am a source of embarrassment, but you must bear with me as a necessary evil, for which you are yourselves responsible. By assassinating my uncle you arrested my being educated by a French philosopher and a democrat. You took me into your own hands, and whatever I am to-day, remember I am the product of the education which *you* gave me."

And he was quite right. Indeed, he proved a more brilliant man than his Serb educators had expected. His teachers imparted a certain amount of scientific knowledge, and Mr. Ristich, the second Regent, developed his keen political instincts, but the influence of the officers by whom he was surrounded was far from wholesome. They impressed him with the idea that the adherents of the Karageorgevich dynasty were incessantly plotting to murder him, or at least to drive him from the throne and replace him by Prince Peter Karageorgevich. They taught him never to go out, never to receive anyone without a revolver in his pocket. Although an optimist by nature, Milan developed, under such auspices, into a rank pessimist. These and other sinister influences also made him an atheist.

From his father, Milosh Obrenovich (the son of Jephrem Obrenovich, who was the brother of Prince Milosh, the founder of the Obrenovich dynasty), he inherited his fondness for beautiful women and his passion for gambling. From his mother, Maria Catargi, daughter of a Rumanian noble of the Catargi family and of Madame Balsh, he inherited much of his Latin genius: bright and quick intelligence, impetuosity, generosity, love of the arts. By instinct and temperament he was more French than Serb, and was nowhere so happy as in Paris.

Nothing gave him greater pleasure than when I brought him historical evidence that the Moldavian noblemen Balsh—to whom his grandmother was related—were descendants of the Serbian Princess Balshich, of the Upper and Lower Zetta (now Montenegro and the Boyana Valley), who were themselves connected with the Italian noble family Del Balzo, who again were a

branch of the famous French family, Seigneurs les Baux, of the Château de Baux, in Provence. I suggested that he should adopt in his coat of arms the famous star from the arms of the Seigneurs les Baux. He did not accept my suggestion because, he said, that star was really a comet, or, as the Serbs call it, "a star with a tail."

But I always considered King Milan as a reincarnation of one of the old Seigneurs les Baux, troubadours and soldiers, uniting courage and bravery on the battlefield, and amidst difficulties, with a great fondness for beautiful women. He was my King, and I naturally wished to be a loyal subject, and I think I succeeded in that wish. But King Milan was more to me than my King. I saw in him what other people did not see—the personification of a mediæval French Knight, and I admired and loved him notwithstanding his weak points. Why he took a liking for me I do not know. On one occasion, after a banquet at the Palace, he said, "No one in Serbia was and is so impertinent to me as Mijatovich, but somehow I cannot be angry with him, and I even like his impertinence." Really, I never was impertinent in my life, but I never hesitated to criticise the thoughts, words and acts of my King, and to tell him frankly what I considered the plain truth.

I came into closer contact with King Milan in 1873 when, at his insistence, I entered Marinovich's Cabinet as Minister of Finance. He was then only the reigning Prince of Serbia, vassal of the Sultan of Turkey. He often invited me to lunch or dinner in the Palace. Once, after dinner, he took me and his first aide-de-camp, General Zach, to the smoking-room, and there, after

some talk on current political events, he suddenly said to me:

"You have the reputation of having absorbed some of the religious zeal of the English people. Tell me frankly, do you, a cultured man and a student of history, believe in the existence of a personal God?"

I told him that most certainly and most sincerely I did believe in a personal God.

"I am astonished to hear that," he answered. "The people regard you as a learned man, but how can a learned man believe in a personal God? My first teacher, Professor Huet, a truly erudite man and philosopher, did not believe there was a God. My present physician, your own chum, Dr. Vladan Georgevich, does not believe there is a God. Nor do I believe in His existence, although I must comply with the superstition of my people and go on festival days to the church, cross myself, and kiss crosses and pictures of the Saints. To play the hypocrite is part of my public duty, as I was taught by my teachers and advisers."

"Not by me, Sire," interrupted the old General.

"No, not by you, General," the King admitted.

Then I expressed astonishment and grief at hearing him talk as he did. I think it was the first time I ever delivered anything like a sermon. I frequently did that in later years, and he bestowed upon me the nickname of "Popp" (Priest), one of the numerous sobriquets which he liked to give people. It is unnecessary to mention my arguments here, nor, in fact, do I remember them now. But I recall the visible impression I made on him when I assured him that, in spite of his gifts and intelligence, he could not fulfil his high mission and heavy tasks without God's guidance and

help, and that I had no doubt that he would find that there was a personal God, should it ever be his lot to pass through great trials and sufferings. He became silent, as though lost in thought. Then he spoke in this sense (of course, I do not pretend to quote his *ipsissima verba*, though the purport of his remarks is correctly recorded):

"Look, now, my dear Popp, you and Dr. Vladan Georgevich are personal friends; both of you are learned men; you believe in God, he does not. I wish you and Dr. Vladan, and the third person here, my dear General Zach, would come every Thursday during the next month to dine with me. After dinner we shall have Russian tea in the billiard-room, and you and Vladan will discuss, in my presence and in that of the General, the question: 'Does a personal God exist?' I am ready to listen and to decide whose arguments are the more convincing. I should really be glad if you could overturn the materialistic philosophy of my doctor."

I accepted the proposal with pleasure. I remember —even now not without emotion—that General Zach, placing me in a Court carriage to take me home, embraced and kissed me, thanking me for all I had said to the young Prince that evening. The Prince kept his word, and during the next four Thursdays we four dined together, and afterwards Dr. Vladan Georgevich and I discussed the momentous question, on one or two occasions the discussion lasting until after midnight.

Dr. Vladan Georgevich was one of the most brilliant men in Serbia between 1870 and 1900: a poet, a novelist, a clever physician and surgeon (winning the German Iron Cross for services rendered to the wounded in 1870), an eloquent debater, organiser of the State Sanitary

Service, and, finally, a constructive statesman and Prime Minister from 1897 to 1900. At the time of our discussion we were both young men, I in my thirty-first, he in his twenty-ninth year. Prince Milan, in his nineteenth, and General Zach, in his sixtieth year or thereabouts, plainly enjoyed our exchange of ideas. On the fourth Thursday night my last effort to demolish Dr. Vladan's trench—i.e. "there is absolutely no scientific and not even logical proof of the existence of a personal God"—was declared by the young Prince to have failed. He thanked me for my efforts, but did not find my arguments convincing.

"No doubt it is my fault, not yours," I replied. "But I am sure that one day you will yourself be assured that there indeed exists a personal God, and that, although I have failed to satisfy you at present, I was right and my friend Vladan wrong."

On his return from Jerusalem in the summer of 1889 King Milan reminded me of these words, with the confession, "Yes, I have discovered myself that you were right and that Vladan was wrong." But I will speak of his conversion a little later.

I found Prince Milan not only atheistic but, in the political sphere, deeply pessimistic. He used to say in the hearing of truly devoted friends: "I have only one friend in Serbia, and that is my dog Vigo!" Occasionally he would protest to me, "You, Vladan and Kosta [General Kosta Protich] pretend to be my faithful friends, but if the supporters of Peter Karageorgevich succeed in murdering me, as they murdered my uncle Michael, you three would be the first to kiss the hand of Peter when he came to the throne. Your vivid imagination pictures the throne as a portion of heaven set apart

for the happiness of the Sovereign and for the people he reigns over. For me it is a rack on which I have been, for no fault of mine, daily tortured. You call me intelligent. But what use can I make of my intelligence when your intelligence does not understand mine? I wish to serve my country, and I have my own ideas how best to serve it, but how can I work them out when I am told that my first duty is to watch the enemies of the dynasty, to defeat their conspiracies, and be prepared to meet, day or night, the bomb, revolver, or knife of an assassin?"

Unfortunately, there was much truth in what he said. I tried honestly—and I ought to say that Dr. Vladan Georgevich did so too—to guide him back to his natural optimism.

In 1875 I entered the Cabinet of Danilo Stefanovich. It was composed of Old and Young Conservatives, and had to deal with a national Assembly (Skupshtina) of which the majority was Liberal. We tried to work with such a House, but, after weeks of endeavour and patience, found it impossible to establish a *modus vivendi*, and therefore asked the Prince either to let us dissolve the Assembly and order new elections or accept our resignations. The Prince declared for the former alternative, and signed the decree for the dissolution of the Skupshtina. The Prime Minister, an old man, asked me to read the decree to the Assembly, "seeing that you are the only popular Minister in an unpopular Cabinet."

It was the first dissolution in the Parliamentary history of modern Serbia, and the decree fell like a thunderbolt. The deputies, leaving their places, rushed to shake hands with me. The member for Ujitsa, the

advocate Alexa Popovich, a political and personal friend, said to me: "Do you not see how the predictions of Matha of Kremna are fulfilling themselves in all details?"

I told him that I did not know anything about such predictions.

"I think you ought to know them," he retorted. "You write histories of the past, but this poor peasant wrote, or rather dictated, the history of coming events, and they are turning out as he predicted. If our Prince does not know anything about Matha of Kremna he ought to know his predictions, as they concern him more than anybody else."

That evening I dined at the Palace. After dinner I told the Prince what I had heard, and he at once sent an equerry to fetch Mr. Popovich, and then both the Prince and I heard for the first time the story of Matha's predictions. Popovich assured us he had with his own eyes read Matha's depositions, officially recorded and still kept in the archives of the Court of Justice of Ujitsa.

I will now reproduce, as fully and as accurately as I can, what Popovich disclosed.

"On May 29th, 1868 [O.S.], about 3 p.m., there came to Ujitsa, running and breathless, a peasant well known on the market and in the inns as 'Matha iz Kremna' [Matheas from Kremna]. Kremna is a village some five miles to the west of Ujitsa. He raced through the streets and shouted at the top of his voice and in great alarm, 'Oh, brethren, help! help! They are murdering our Prince!' The police, thinking him mad or drunk, arrested him. Four hours later an official telegram arrived from Belgrade announcing the assassination of Prince Michael Obrenovich III. in the woods

of Koshutnyak [Parc-aux-Cerfs], near Belgrade. The Prefect of Ujitsa, thinking that Matha must have known something about the conspiracy, immediately opened an interrogative examination.

"It seems that the Prefect invited the President of the Court of Justice to be present. Poor Matha had some difficulty in convincing the Prefect and the judge that he knew nothing about the conspiracy, but that he saw the assassination of the Prince in a vision. 'My dear gentlemen,' Matha said, 'you do not know, but many people are aware that I am subject to visions, and what I see generally happens, as in this case.'

"The Prefect answered: 'If that is so, perhaps you can see the events which are going to take place in our country?'

"'Oh, yes, certainly!' replied Matha. 'I have already had such visions.'

"'Well,' said the Prefect, 'tell us what you see and my secretary will write it down.'

"Matha thereupon dictated the following visions:

"'A young boy is coming from abroad to be our Prince. As he is still young, a commission of three men will govern the country until he comes of age. When he begins to reign we shall have much trouble with him. He is lively and restless. He will constantly change his Ministers, will frequently disagree with the people's will, will often dissolve the Skupshtina, and the country will never be quiet under him. He will marry a beautiful girl, have a son by her, and then divorce her. He will make several wars and be beaten, but nevertheless will gain fresh territories and advance to become King. I see him sitting in his palace in Belgrade talking with the Prefect of Nish. . . .'

"Here the Prefect interrupted him: 'You mean they are telegraphing to each other? Besides, you know Nish is in Turkey, where they have Pashas and not Prefects!'

"'I know that,' resumed Matha, 'but all will be changed; Nish will be ours, and our Prefect in his office in Nish will talk with our King in his room in the Palace of Belgrade! How it is done I do not know, but I see them doing it. At last the restless King gets tired, leaves the Crown and throne to his son, goes abroad, travels much, and dies abroad, far from his country. His son will be the last of his dynasty and will die young, childless, and by assassination. Then I see Peter Karageorgevich ascending the throne. During his reign a foreign army invades and occupies Serbia, and the people will have to undergo such terrible sufferings that, passing the churchyards, they will exclaim, "Oh, you happy dead who do not suffer what we are enduring!" But some time afterwards a man will arise from among the people, a relation of the Obrenovich dynasty, who will gather the people around him and succeed in driving out the foreign army and unite all Serb countries into one State. Then shall begin a period of such happiness and prosperity that people, passing the churchyards, will exclaim, "Oh, what a pity you, who are in your graves, are not alive to enjoy with us this wonderful happiness!"' The Prefect observed: 'You said a moment ago that the Obrenovich dynasty will end by the assassination of the only son of the restless King who is soon to reign in Serbia, and now you assert that a relation of that dynasty will expel the foreign army and unite all Serb countries?' Matha rejoined, 'I cannot explain that to you otherwise than by a simile:

KING MILAN OF SERBIA

We go to the forest and cut an oak as close to the earth as possible and carry away the trunk, but after a time the roots push up a new plant near the spot where the old tree stood.' "

When Popovich finished his report Prince Milan was deeply interested, and requested him to send him the written statement. Popovich promised to do so, at the same time suggesting that the Prince should ask the Minister for the Interior to procure a copy of the original depositions at Ujitsa. I believe the Prince must have obtained this, because whenever we spoke afterwards about Matha of Kremna's predictions he seemed to know some fresh detail of which Popovich had not spoken.

Of this interview between Prince Milan and the ex-Deputy for Ujitsa in 1875 I was reminded in February, 1889, in shocking circumstances. In 1887 Dr. Vladan Georgevich, General Kosta Protich and myself—personal friends of King Milan—were induced by the King to accept portfolios in the Cabinet of that most upright and most energetic of Serbian statesmen, Nikola Christich. On my honour I declare, as I declared always, that I had not the slightest idea what was the true object of King Milan's forcing his three personal friends into the Cabinet. Nor do I believe that the old Prime Minister knew. But I had reason later to suspect that Dr. Vladan Georgevich and General Protich were aware that the King had arranged that the Cabinet should first take the boy Prince (Alexander) from the control of his mother, Queen Nathalie, and afterwards obtain a divorce from the Queen.

Nor did I know, when I entered the Cabinet, what were the real relations between King Milan and the wife of his private secretary, Milan Christich, Madame

Arthemisa. This lady was the daughter of a Greek merchant of Constantinople, who had made money in the timber trade. She was not exactly beautiful; she had a muddy complexion and a bad figure, heavy and large-waisted. But she had beautiful soft black eyes and magnificent black hair. Except that she spoke Greek, Turkish and French, she had no other accomplishments. But she managed somehow to make friends. There was something mysteriously attractive in her. And poor King Milan was not only fascinated, but completely hypnotised by her. She wished him to hate his wife—a woman in physical beauty, charm and accomplishments immeasurably her superior—to divorce her and to abdicate the throne in order to marry her; and he almost mechanically executed three of her wishes. That he did not fulfil her fourth wish also was probably due to some occult influence. Whenever he spoke to me of her I derived the impression that he was on the road to madness. He insisted that she was born to be a Queen, that she was a woman possessing a heart and brains of such quality that no other woman in the world could be compared with her, that we—his Cabinet Ministers—were not worthy to lace her boots, and, finally, that she was the greatest statesman in Europe, far greater than Bismarck ever was!

In August, 1888, the King was spending some time at Gleichenberg, in Styria. He wired me to come at once, as he wished to consult me on an important question. On my arrival he told me that he was so disgusted with us—his Ministers,—with the Serbians, with his friends in Austria, and with his cruel enemies in Russia, that he had determined to abdicate in favour of his boy Sasha (as the Crown Prince Alexander was called). I

tried to show him the unworthiness, indeed the cowardice, of such a step, and he grew annoyed and excited.

"You have the reputation of being an intelligent man," he avowed, "but you are very dense indeed when compared with that wonderful woman, Madame Arthemisa. She is the only person in the world who understands me. She considers that my resolution is right, that I will be doing an act of grand and noble duty, that I will win the respect even of my enemies, and that only then will our country appreciate what I was to my people."

It was obvious from whom the suggestion of abdication had proceeded. I felt it was useless to combat the idea, and asked leave to retire to my room to consider the question quietly. In an hour I returned with the following memorandum:

"Yes," I wrote, "you ought to abdicate, but—not at present. If you abdicate now you will depart leaving a damning balance-sheet—the balance-sheet of a political and moral bankrupt. You have never been more unpopular than you are now in consequence of your divorce of the Queen. You must remain a few years—I suggest four—to redress your moral balance-sheet, to make yourself popular, to make Serbia shed tears of sincere sorrow at your leaving. During these four years educate your son properly and prepare him to be a good king and a noble man. That is your sacred duty to your dynasty, to your son and to your country. Fill these four years with wise, patriotic and grand deeds. At this moment no one in Serbia thinks of claiming a more liberal Constitution. Take the initiative and give, of your own good will, a new and truly liberal Constitution. You spend hundreds of thousands of dinars on Madame

Arthemisa and at cards with Count Bray [the German Minister] and Monsieur Persiani [the Russian Minister]. Give up these expenses, or at least reduce them, and build a church, as our old Kings used to do, a hospital, a home for poor men and women, and create a fund from which every year the best efforts of our literary men shall be rewarded. And then at the end of the fourth year—abdicate!"

He was impressed by my brief protest. "There are some good ideas in it," he said; "I will think about it. I may follow your suggestion. At any rate, the abdication is postponed."

I returned to Belgrade relieved, and reported to my colleagues that the King's abdication was put off, if not quite given up. I was confirmed in this notion by Milan's action. On the very day of his arrival in the capital he invited Dr. Vladan and myself to dinner, and after dinner, when we three were alone, he told us that he wished to execute my Gleichenberg programme. As the main point was the grant of a liberal Constitution, he desired us to help him, that very night, to compose a beautifully-written proclamation to the people, announcing that he intended to promulgate a liberal Constitution, elaborated with the co-operation of the best men of all parties. By midnight we were ready, not without a struggle on my part against the King's wish to introduce a few popular but rather vulgar phrases. Then he ordered Russian tea for us, and spoke of Queen Nathalie—to my pleasant surprise—with admiration. "With all her faults and cruelty to me, she was an excellent mother to Sasha, and in her company the boy made great progress in every direction. Believe me, I love that woman still and after all."

Next day the proclamation was published and received with enthusiasm. Thousands of wires were addressed to the King thanking him for his initiative in enlarging the political rights of the people.

Towards the end of January, 1889, the British Minister, Sir Frederick St. John, asked me whether it was true, as Count Bray had averred, that the King would abdicate on the next National Festival, February 22nd? I told him that was not true, that the King would not abdicate for four years, until he had executed a prearranged programme.

But on February 19th (Old Style) the Prime Minister summoned us to an extraordinary meeting at which he communicated the fact that the King was firmly bent upon abdicating on February 22nd. I could hardly credit my ears. Milan had led me to believe that he was to remain on the throne four years longer in order to carry out fully my Gleichenberg programme. I proposed that we should all go to the King at once and beg him to abandon his fatal resolution. Our venerable Prime Minister in touching words implored Milan not to take the fateful step which would compass the ruin of the dynasty. The Minister of Justice, Pantelich, argued like the clever lawyer he was. Every Minister respectfully expressed his surprise. I spoke very plainly, showing his intended abdication to be a lamentable proof that he lacked moral courage, and that he did not care either for his son or for his country. We wrestled with him for fully an hour, all of us, himself included, standing the whole time. At last he wound up the interview with these words:

"Gentlemen, your consciences may be at ease; you have done your duty towards me and towards the country.

You have honestly tried to convince me that my resolution to abdicate is wrong. I admit that you are right, as State Ministers and as my personal friends. Your arguments are unanswerable. But, gentlemen, believe me, I cannot do otherwise. I can assure you that my resolution is not the result of a light-hearted and sudden impulse. I have considered it for months and months, and have always come to the conclusion that I ought to abdicate. I am not surprised that your devotion moved you to tell me plainly all you think of my decision. But I am astonished that Mijatovich, who knows well that my abdication is unavoidable, should attack me with such fierceness, calling me a coward and an unworthy Obrenovich."

He then dismissed us. Passing from Queen Nathalie's boudoir, in which he received us, the Prime Minister asked us to come to his office, which was in a building adjoining the Palace. After cups of coffee had been served the Prime Minister addressed us thus:

"Gentlemen, you have heard the King say that our colleague, Mr. Mijatovich, knew that his abdication was unavoidable. I think we have a right to request our colleague to explain why he never informed any one of us of the fact."

I reminded the President of my reports from Gleichenberg in the previous year, and also of my oral report to my colleagues at a Cabinet meeting on my return. I firmly believed that the question of the abdication was adjourned for at least four years. What the King meant by saying that I knew his abdication was unavoidable was quite a different matter. He caused me to remember that he and I had together listened to a report on Matha of Kremna's prophecies, in which, among

other things, it was foretold that King Milan would abdicate.

Dr. Vladan Georgevich, Minister of Education and Church Affairs, became indignant. "Are you not ashamed to drag into a serious discussion, and on such a solemn and tragic occasion as this, your crazy belief in some fool's prophecies? Who is this Matha of Kremna? Where and when and what did he prophesy? I believe it is all rubbish."

Unexpectedly the Prime Minister came to my support.

"Gentlemen," he began in his quiet manner, "our colleague Mr. M. is quite right. There was one Matha of Kremna who uttered remarkable prophecies. You remember that I had the misfortune to be the Home Minister at the time of the assassination of Prince Michael. The Prefect of Ujitsa reported to me that on the day of the assassination, and several hours before it took place, a peasant from the village of Kremna came to Ujitsa and told people that the Prince was being attacked and assassinated. The man was examined and his statements were taken down, and a copy of them was sent to me, and I believe is still in the secret archives of this office. I read them at the time and remember that I was much impressed by them, but I cannot recall their details now."

As I have said, unexpectedly I got a witness of the first rank to the existence of Matha of Kremna and his soothsayings. Many of the Scottish Highlanders are known to possess what is called "second sight," and it is my belief that Matha was similarly gifted.

We decided to send in our resignations forthwith. The King accepted them towards midnight of

February 21st, when he signed a decree appointing General Belimarkovich Prime Minister, General Protich War Minister and myself Foreign Minister. The Cabinet was to last only eleven hours, as both Generals, with Jovan Ristich, were appointed the three Regents until the new King should come of age. King Milan asked me to give him a final proof of friendship by acting as his Minister of Foreign Affairs on the following morning at the reception of the Diplomatic Corps.

The Ministers arrived in full dress with orders on their breasts, as was customary at Court receptions on the National Festival. I received them in the large drawing-room of the Palace, and when they were all assembled I went to fetch the King. The King, in full uniform and wearing the cordon of the White Eagle, addressed those present in a rather long speech, informing them that he was abdicating in favour of his son, requesting them to transmit to their Sovereigns and Governments his thanks for their friendliness during his reign, and expressing his hope that they would continue to be friendly to Serbia and her new King.

I was standing on the left of Milan, two or three feet behind the line on which he stood conversing with the diplomats. I myself was looking vaguely at the glittering group of foreign Ministers. Suddenly I was struck by the voice of the King. Decidedly it was not his usual voice, but much deeper and hollower. I raised my head and looked at the King's profile. Yes, it was he who spoke, but not in his natural voice.

After the diplomats had shaken hands with the King and left, the latter, accompanied by me, went to the next room, the blue salon, where his household, his aides-de-camp, equerries, comptroller of the household,

doctors and Court priests had met. Having thanked them all for their services and asked them to be faithful and devoted to his son, he withdrew, but I remained to shake hands with many of them. Immediately they gathered around me, and Dr. Laza Lazarevich—the foremost novelist in Serbia—inquired of me, "Who is the person who made that long speech in the grand salon?" I told him that it was the King. Several officers expressed their surprise and told me that they were listening to what was going on in the grand salon, the door between that salon and their room being slightly open, and were puzzled by the strange voice making that long speech. It was therefore not my own hallucination that the King spoke in a voice other than his usual.

I next accompanied the King—who now had his boy Sasha with him—to the new Palace, where, in the great hall, the members of the Council of State, many members of the National Assembly, the ex-Ministers, the Metropolitan with the high Clergy, the higher officers of the different departments of the administration, the mayor of Belgrade and the members of the municipal board were convened to hear the King. Milan spoiled a solemn occasion by behaving like an actor on the stage. I thought the whole scene unnecessary, exaggerated and artificial, as, proclaiming his son Alexander (Sasha) the new King of Serbia, he fell on his knee before him and pronounced the words of the oath of fidelity.

I alone went with ex-King Milan from the new Palace to the old one and to his working-room. There he threw himself into an arm-chair and, with a deep breath, exclaimed: "At last I feel happy. A heavy load has been lifted from my shoulders."

I hoped his happiness of that moment might be

lasting and that he might never have reason to repent of his abdication.

Only a few weeks later the ex-King left Serbia for Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Damascus. He wished to spend Easter in Jerusalem. He repeatedly invited me to go with him. I could not do so for several reasons, the principal being that I was afraid that the squalor of Jerusalem and the unseemly scenes of conflict between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics at Easter might destroy my faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

On his return to Belgrade he said to me: "You made a great mistake not to come with me to Jerusalem. Your fear, I am sure, was groundless. You know I have been all my life an atheist. I have returned believing in God and the Saviour. The impressiveness of the service on Easter Day simply broke the hardness of my heart, and when the Patriarch of Jerusalem took me into the grave of Our Lord and there administered the Communion, I wept and felt that God was miraculously transforming me into a new man. In the grave of the Lord I was born again. When I left the church I remembered you and regretted you were not with me."

While I was Minister of Serbia in Constantinople in 1900 I made the acquaintance of a former Patriarch of Jerusalem. He invited me to lunch with him on one occasion in his house at Chalkis. When I told him what I had heard from ex-King Milan about the impressiveness of the service at Easter and how he had come out of the grave of Jesus quite a reformed man, the old Patriarch answered:

"Yes, I was then Patriarch of Jerusalem. I took King Milan by the hand and led him into Our Lord's grave. He wished to partake of the Communion, and

I told him he must make there and then a confession of sin. He fell on his knees and said, 'I know I have sinned against God, not believing in Him for so many years; and in the exercise of my royal power I have, no doubt, wronged many people. I have sinned also against——' I stopped him and told him that it was not necessary to enumerate his sins. It was enough to acknowledge that he was a sinful man, that he repented of his sins, and prayed God to forgive him, and asked the Lord Jesus Christ to wash him, in His great mercy and by His blood, from all his sins. When he had done this and I had read over him the prayer of forgiveness, I raised him up, kissed him, and said: 'Now, by the mercy of our Lord and Saviour, all your sins have been forgiven you. But you must take care not to sin again. If you commit fresh sins God may punish you by punishing your son——' I could not proceed farther because he fell on my shoulder and, weeping loudly, exclaimed: 'Oh, no, no! Let God punish me, but let Him not punish my son for my sin!' I tried to quiet him, and, deeply touched myself, exclaimed, raising my eyes upwards: 'O merciful Father, have mercy on the tears of this poor man!'"

I cannot say whether King Milan sinned after that against God or his country. He believed in God and tried honestly, according to his light, to serve Serbia. But, for some reason, God punished him by his own son's cruelty towards him—a son whom he loved and adored. Milan died on February 11th, 1901, away from his son, who would not allow him to return to his country. And his son was assassinated horribly in 1903. How prophetic was the Patriarch of Jerusalem!

CHAPTER IX

Queen Nathalie

ONE day in September, 1874, Prince Milan informed Prime Minister Marinovich that he intended to spend a few weeks in Vienna, where he would meet his mother. On the eighth day after his departure the Premier convoked a full meeting of the Cabinet and read to us a telegram in which Prince Milan announced that he had just become engaged to Mademoiselle Nathalie Ketchko, the second daughter of a Russian, Colonel Ketchko.

It was as if a thunderbolt had dropped from the skies. For a few moments we were thunderstruck, as it were, humiliated by the surprise our Sovereign had given us. Not even to the venerable Prime Minister, an old and faithful friend of his dynasty, had Prince Milan mentioned that his visit to Vienna was to meet his destined bride; yet now he confronted his Government with an accomplished fact, and had not deigned to consult it about an act of such importance to the nation.

No one was more upset than our Prime Minister. He sat pale and speechless, with tears in his eyes. The first member who recovered speech was Tsenich, Minister of Justice, noted for his independence of character and frankness, as well as for his severity and impartiality as judge.

"Gentlemen," he said, "who is Colonel Ketchko?"

The Prime Minister answered: "I did not know

myself, but the Russian Minister informed me that he is a Rumanian by nationality, but, having large landed property in Bessarabia, is a Russian subject and colonel in a Russian Cavalry regiment."

"Did the Prince tell you anything about the likelihood of his engagement?" asked the Minister of Justice.

"No," answered the Prime Minister. "He only told me he desired to visit his mother, who was staying in Vienna for a week or two. Some months ago I said to him that it was high time we looked out for a wife for him. And as the whole Serbian nation would be delighted to see him marry a Russian Princess, I asked permission to make confidential inquiries in Petersburg [Petrograd]. With his leave I took certain steps at the Imperial Court which will now make me appear absolutely ridiculous!"

Tsenich then proposed that we should send a telegram to the Prince, wishing him and his fiancée every happiness, at the same time tendering our resignations. Several Ministers concurred, but after a prolonged discussion the Premier persuaded us to pause before adopting such a hostile attitude towards the Prince's betrothal.

Naturally, we were disappointed with the turn things had taken and somewhat biased also against our Prince's fiancée. But when, a month later, on her return from Vienna to Rumania, she came for a day to Belgrade, and we saw what a beautiful and most intelligent girl she was, our prejudice vanished like snow before the noonday sun. In an instant she won the sympathy of every man, woman and child in the capital. With the exception of the cheering at the surrender of the then Turkish fortress to Prince Michael in 1867, I never heard such enthusiastic shouts as those with which

young Nathalie Ketchko was greeted by the Serbs when she arrived for the first time in Belgrade as fiancée of the Prince.

By Prince Milan's clever although not chivalrous manœuvres Marinovich's Cabinet was obliged to resign a few months later. He had some difficulty in forming a stable Cabinet, and his marriage with Nathalie took place under the Cabinet of Lubomir Kalyevich, well known as a faithful adherent of the exiled Karageorgevich dynasty, but at the same time a perfectly correct subject of Prince Milan and a thorough gentleman. From early childhood Kalyevich and I had known each other. We passed through the middle and higher schools together, and, as companions as well as compatriots, we went to the German universities. He and I were always devoted friends, although he was a partisan, as I have said, of the Karageorgevich, while I adhered to the Obrenovich dynasty. But all this *en passant*.

We Serbs, as all other Slavs, are prone to mysticism and believe much in omens, for which reason an incident at the wedding of Milan and Nathalie poured much cold water on the enthusiasm of the Belgrade population. When Nathalie, in her radiant beauty, was driving from the Palace to the Cathedral, there was a glorious sun shining. The people rapturously cheered the young bride whom the sun was acclaiming as predestined to be a happy wife. But during the long wedding ceremony in the Cathedral heavy clouds spread over the capital. When the newly-married couple stepped out of the Cathedral the sky appeared dark, and thunder was heard in the distance. When they took their places in the open carriage the pair of white horses would not move from the spot. For at least ten

minutes the efforts of the driver, outriders, and some policemen and officers were useless; they only made the horses rise on their hind legs, nearly overturning the bridal carriage and its occupants.

A battalion of soldiers presenting arms and a dense crowd in front of the Cathedral witnessed the incident with consternation. People were whispering to each other: "Oh, this is not a good omen! It looks as if this marriage will not be a happy one!" I was with my wife in the suite of the Prince, and we, too, felt chilled by the ominous portent.

Hardly had we reached the Palace when a storm of tropical intensity burst over Belgrade. The clouds were so black and heavy that in the great drawing-room of the Palace, where the invited notabilities were assembled in a circle, we could scarcely see each other. The Prince and Princess were evidently deeply impressed; both were pale, and addressed only a few conventional words to their guests. These guests formed the *élite* of Serbia's statesmen, officers, and men of letters and science. Yet, while we were leaving the Palace, not a single smiling and cheerful face was to be seen. Many of us expressed the fear that this darkness in the Palace was of ill augury for the happiness of the bridal pair. Call it a coincidence if you will, but the later events justified the worst forebodings.

Queen Nathalie was the most interesting woman I ever met. She was very beautiful, with large, dark brown, velvety, expressive eyes. She was distinctly of an Oriental type of beauty. Something in her face reminded me of an Armenian girl whom I once met in Constantinople and who was supposed to be a descendant of old Armenian kings. Providence had also endowed

her with many queenly qualities of heart and soul. She was absolutely virtuous and deeply religious, but not a bigot. She was most kind, charitable, generous to everyone—save to her own husband. She had a magnetic nature, easily winning the admiration and devotion of men and women. Besides, she had the intelligence and *esprit* of a Frenchwoman, not only because, as a Rumanian girl, she had had a French education, but also because, as historical research proved to me, she had in her veins at least some drops of noble French blood. Indeed, she was a rare, probably unique type, and represented a union of the genius of the Orient and the Troubadour-Provence.

She had vivid and correct political instincts. With abounding tact she never wished to influence the policy of her husband or his Government. But when Ministers asked her occasionally to express her opinion, she gave it frankly and fearlessly and always for the cause of justice and liberty. I can never forget how effectively she helped us—Prime Minister Pirotyanatz, Home Minister Garashanin and myself, Minister of Finance in the Progressist Cabinet—to dissuade King Milan from his intention of arresting the members of the central committee of the Radical party on a charge of high treason. She did not deny that she hated Austria and loved Russia, but she was never an agent of the Russian policy, as the Austrians often accused her of being. From the first day of her arrival on Serbian soil she began to admire and love the Serbian nation, and was always an ardent Serbian patriot.

As I am writing contributions to history and desire to be impartial towards friends and foes, I must complete my pen portrait of Queen Nathalie's sunny features by

her with many friendly marks of favor and [illegible] was absolutely devoted and deeply attached to her [illegible]. She was most kind, considerate, generous [illegible] to her son, husband. She [illegible] magnetic nature easily attracted the affections [illegible] devotion of men and women. Besides, she had [illegible] intelligence and spirit of a Frenchwoman, [illegible] kindness of a Hellene and, she had had a liberal [illegible] as a Hellenic child, she had had a liberal education, but also because as intellectual companion [illegible] to me, she had to have always a keen interest [illegible] French blood. Indeed, she was a most valuable [illegible] mine, and consequently a source of no [illegible] to [illegible] and the Fatherland herself.

She had also a most [illegible] political instinct. [illegible] remarkable way she could foresee the consequences [illegible] of her actions or of the circumstances. She often [illegible] which was exceedingly helpful to me. Besides, she [illegible] of Russia and Germany and among the two [illegible] Queen and Empress. I was never happy when [illegible] the Court of Athens. Whenever [illegible] Queen Olympia Cavalieri and Queen Marie of Roumania [illegible] the Empress Eugenie and Queen Marie [illegible] the intention of upsetting the Constitution of the country, [illegible] on the Hellenic people on a charge of high treason. She [illegible] from the hatred Austria and [illegible] Prince [illegible] to spite of the Russian [illegible] to the throne, which aroused her of being. [illegible] the end she [illegible] to Athens and the [illegible] of Greece and [illegible] the Russian, Austrian and [illegible] political interests.

As I am writing recollections of history and [illegible] as the [illegible] personal friends and [illegible] I must complete [illegible] my portrait of Queen Sophie's many features by

QUEEN NATHALIE OF SERBIA

some shadows. The vocation of Kings and Queens is a special calling which, as every profession, requires special preparation and education. Queen Nathalie, although undoubtedly an intelligent and cultured woman, was not educated and trained for the high position in which Providence placed her. She was too much of a woman to be a perfect Queen, exalted above common passions, jealousy and hatred. Undoubtedly injured and provoked as wife, in her resentment and reaction from the injustice done to her she often forgot the self-respect and dignity which she owed to herself and to her people as Queen of Serbia. She was just an ordinary woman without qualification for martyr or saint. Her tragedy were still more serious and more touching had she not co-operated with King Milan to darken it by incidents of a rather discreditable nature. Particularly I think she ought not to have refused to give her son to her husband who asked his heir to the throne in the name of the nation. By her refusal she forced the King to resort to the intervention of the German police, a proceeding which was, in my opinion, simply disgraceful. For that scandal, however, Queen Nathalie must share the responsibility with King Milan.

Moreover, although kind, charitable and generous to everybody in general, she was often cruel to her husband in particular. She seems to have been harsher to him than we, his Ministers and friends, were aware of. Milan often complained to me of her injustice, and I always defended the Queen. Once he said to me, "You say she cannot be cruel, or, at any rate, she does not mean it. Please look at that photo intently, and you will see she has the face of a tigress. She was born cruel!"

"But, Sire," I demurred, "the Queen has not the eyes of a tigress!"

"Oh! her eyes have bewitched you. It is of no use to talk to you."

I was the witness of at least one incident in which the Queen appeared to me rude and inconsiderate. At a State dinner at the Palace in honour of Ministers and State Councillors I sat on the left of the King, the Queen sitting at the other side of the table, opposite the King. The King and I had a lively conversation on the subject of national education. Suddenly her Majesty inquired across the table, "What are you discussing in so lively a fashion?"

"Madame," I answered, "his Majesty is discoursing about education."

"Then I must pity you," she said aloud; "for you are talking of education with a man who has none."

Some of the guests laughed as if the Queen had said a harmless, witty thing. I was so shocked that I could not utter a word.

In an unbalanced moment King Milan wrote to her asking her to help him out of a serious financial embarrassment. The letter was full of self-accusations and repentance, lacking—as was, perhaps, unavoidable—in self-respect and dignity. Never in his life did King Milan appear so pitiable and mean. Queen Nathalie not only refused to help him (against which refusal nobody could say a word), but sent his letter, which was unquestionably confidential and written for her alone, to the French Press. It appeared in many papers and did grave harm to Milan's position in Paris and other countries. I do not forget that King Milan, in

divorcing Queen Nathalie, behaved brutally, but I cannot consider her publication of his private and confidential letter in any sense justifiable or honourable.

It is proper, and due to Queen Nathalie, that I should add that, excepting these two cases, I do not know any other act of hers which could be called cruel.

Now I am going to recite a strange story which Queen Nathalie told me herself. In 1886 I was Minister of Finance in the Cabinet of Milutin Garashanin. One day in June the Queen sent word that she wished to see me. I went at once to the Palace and was received in her boudoir. She told me she took an interest in a poor family, consisting of the mother, two daughters and a son. The mother was a washerwoman who worked day and night to enable her two daughters to attend the high school for girls in order to qualify for becoming teachers in the national schools. The Queen assisted the woman with money every month, but as she had many poor to support, this help, together with the washerwoman's precarious earnings, was not enough to maintain the family of four persons in which only the mother was a breadwinner. The Queen asked whether I could not provide the son with some employment at a small salary, and added that the young fellow wrote a good hand. I promised the Queen to find the boy a place as copyist in the custom house of Belgrade the very next day.

Queen Nathalie was so pleased that she said, "Now, as you have been good enough to do me a pleasure, I will, while you take a cup of coffee, tell you a story which you may deem an interesting contribution to your store of occult experiences. I often laugh at you and

tease you because of your belief in the occult, but I myself have reason to believe in clairvoyance."

Then she told me how, when a young child of six, her mother took her on a visit to her aunt, Princess Mourousi, in Odessa. One morning her mother came up to the nursery and said to her, "Come down with me to the drawing-room, and don't be afraid if a gipsy woman takes your hand into hers." In the drawing-room were many ladies of the best society in the town, sitting on sofas and chairs, while in the centre of the room a gipsy woman sat on the carpet. The old crone looked for a moment at the child's hand and then exclaimed, "Glory to God! This girl will one day be Tsaritsa; I see her wearing a crown!" The ladies laughed aloud and some said, "Oh, you old witch! How is it possible that the daughter of Madame Ketchko should come to wear a crown?" The woman gravely retorted, "I do not know how, but I tell you this child will be one day Tsaritsa, or Queen, or Princess; something that will enable her to bear a crown. But when she reaches her twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth year she will lose that crown. I do not see clearly how, but a tree or some timber will be the cause." The gipsy used the Russian word *dryevo*, which means "tree" and also "timber."

"Now," the Queen continued, "as the first part of the prophecy, against all the probabilities, was realised, I am afraid the second part may also be fulfilled. The critical years are coming. Whenever I drive in the Koshutnyak [Parc-aux-Cerfs, near Belgrade] and enter the wood I find myself calling to the driver, 'Take care of the horses!' That is because I think the horses might grow restive, rush through the forest wildly, and perhaps

a low branch of a tree might catch and kill me. For in that way the second part of the prophecy might be fulfilled."

This conversation took place in June, 1886. In September, 1888, King Milan divorced Queen Nathalie and she virtually ceased to wear the crown. The chief cause of that act was Madame Arthemisa Christich, the daughter of a timber merchant!

CHAPTER X

King Peter

I HAVE not much to say about King Peter, but, knowing something characteristic of him, as he has many detractors, even among those who helped to raise him to the throne, it is right that justice should be done to him by one whose career, from 1869 to 1903, was often associated with measures to prevent him from succeeding Milan Obrenovich as King of Serbia.

I was born when King Peter's father, Alexander Karageorgevich, was elected reigning Prince of Serbia. My childhood was spent in an atmosphere in which poets and authors wrote in laudation of Karageorge. Prince Alexander was a handsome man, who looked exceedingly well in the uniform of a Serbian colonel, and to me, between my tenth and sixteenth year, he was an ideal Prince. As a schoolboy I admired King Peter's mother, Princess Persida, who used to come every Sunday and Saint's Day to church, dressed in the national costume of silk or velvet, with pearls and diamonds on her red headgear. Although my own mother wore a brooch with a portrait of the exiled Prince Michael Obrenovich, and used to sing songs which she believed were written by him, and although my stepfather was an admirer of Prince Milosh, the founder of the Obrenovich dynasty, I grew up a partisan of the reigning Karageorgevich dynasty.

I was confirmed in my sentiments when—along with

my two chums, Milutin Garashanin, the son of the Prime Minister, and Lubomir Kalyevich, a future Prime Minister—I was invited every Thursday afternoon to the Palace garden to play ball with the heir-apparent, Prince Peter, then in his fourteenth year, while we others were two years older. Milutin Garashanin and I became, later, stanch and faithful partisans of the Obrenovich dynasty, while Kalyevich remained throughout life faithful to Prince Peter. Yet when, in 1858, Prince Alexander was deposed and the young Prince Peter had to follow his father into exile, I cried bitterly. The old Prince Milosh, although Serbia's only great man in the nineteenth century, did not impress me much. However, in 1862, on the bombardment of the open town of Belgrade by the Turkish forces, we students of the Lyceum constructed a barricade near the fortress between the Cathedral and our school, and when the stately Prince Michael, with his beautiful wife, Princess Julia (*née* Countess Hunyadi), came to visit our barricade, I felt that Prince Michael was a noble personification of our national ideal, and from that day I became an adherent of the Obrenovich dynasty.

I resigned my post as Serbian Minister to the Court of St. James's immediately on the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga. If that resignation were a protest, it was a protest against those Serbian officers who, forgetting the obligations of chivalry, were capable of assassinating a woman—Queen Draga. But some of them, surrounding King Peter on his arrival in Belgrade, persuaded him that my resignation was a protest against his occupation of the throne of Serbia, which, of course, it was not, nor was ever meant to be. They succeeded all the more easily in that intrigue as I was well known

to be the personal friend of King Milan and a faithful adherent of the Obrenovich dynasty, and as I was the only Serbian diplomatist who resigned his post as Minister to a foreign Court.

Somewhat later a still graver intrigue prejudiced King Peter's mind against me. The British Government broke off diplomatic relations with Serbia, and this rupture was, in the King's entourage, ascribed to my personal influence with the British Government, and to my hatred of King Peter. Every British reader of these pages will at once recognise how ridiculous this suspicion of my supposed influence with the British Government was. Nor have I ever had the slightest hatred of King Peter, although I could not honestly say that I am an admirer of some of his earlier acts on the throne.

Deeply did I regret the rupture of British diplomatic relations with Serbia. The Serbian newspapers in the pay of the conspirators represented the rupture as of no importance. I then started in the most respectable of Belgrade newspapers, the *Trgovinski Glasnik*, a campaign to explain to the people that it was of vital consequence to win the friendship of Great Britain, and that we ought to be ready to make every reasonable sacrifice to enable the British Government to renew diplomatic relations with Serbia. At the same time, although living in London as a private person, I took the liberty of approaching my friends in the British Foreign Office—Sir Eric Barrington in the Unionist, and, later, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice in the Liberal Cabinet—with suggestions of the desirability of renewing relations.

It was my suggestion that Serbia should facilitate the restoration of these relations by removing from

active service in the army the four principal leaders of the conspiracy, and that the British Government should accept that as a concession to the British point of view. The Unionist Foreign Office hesitated to accept that basis for reconciliation out of consideration, I believe, for King Edward VII.'s views. Just because it was known that King Edward was personally disinclined to approve of the renewal of diplomatic relations, the friends of King Peter in Petrograd and Rome succeeded in getting instructions sent to Count Benckendorff and Signor Pansa that they should see King Edward and try to persuade him to withdraw his opposition to the re-opening of diplomatic relations. They went to Windsor, saw King Edward, and did their best for King Peter. But King Edward politely but very decidedly refused to comply with their suggestion. Signor Pansa—of whom I was an old friend—narrated to me the whole conversation with the King at that remarkable audience.

It will astonish no one that a year later, when the General Election gave an overwhelming majority to the Liberals, King Edward could not refuse the proposal of the new Government to re-establish relations with Serbia.

But a still more dangerous intrigue was set on foot to prejudice King Peter against me. Early in the autumn of 1905 a great number of post cards containing a photograph of Prince Arthur of Connaught were disseminated throughout Serbia. Immediately the idea was fostered that they were distributed by me, that I was organising an attempt to replace King Peter by Prince Arthur of Connaught on the throne, and that this was the reason why I remained in London and did not return to Serbia. Now for the truth.

In June, 1905, three Serbians came to London

to see me "on a special mission," as they said. One was an ex-colonel, another an ex-prefect, and the third a well-to-do merchant. They told me they had been sent by a committee of patriots who wished to inform me that nobody in Serbia was satisfied with King Peter, that even the conspirators were disappointed with him, and that he could readily be deposed. But the difficulty was who was to replace him? The committee, after considering the question, had come to the unanimous conclusion that Prince Arthur of Connaught ought to be elected King of Serbia. They had, accordingly, been especially deputed to see me to ask me to introduce them to Prince Arthur.

I told them at once that I could not accede to their request for several reasons. One was that it was not to the interest of our country that, after the terrible shock of the assassination of King Alexander, a new dynastic revolution should take place. Another was that King Edward would never consent. I added that I would make myself ridiculous in the eyes both of King Edward and Prince Arthur if I were to approach them on the matter.

I received the deputation in one of the rooms of my club (the Royal Societies), and for several days they discussed the project with me over a dish of tea in the hope that I would give way. But I did not yield, and, disappointed, they left London with the sole consolation that they carried away all the photographs of Prince Arthur they could buy. I advised them to have patience with King Peter and, in justice to him, allow him time to adjust himself to his surroundings and duties.

This is a true and faithful account of what really took place in 1905. And yet King Peter for several

years believed that I was conspiring to supersede him by Prince Arthur of Connaught. A friend of Pashich, the Radical Prime Minister of Serbia, assured me that when the Premier once proposed to King Peter to reappoint me Minister in London his Majesty answered: "You do not seem to know that Mr. Mijatovich is working to replace me by an English Prince on the throne of Serbia!" Pashich was reported to have protested: "Sire, I do not believe Mr. Mijatovich is doing any such thing. He is a sincere and straightforward man, and his first act would be to inform you by letter that henceforth he was going to work against you."

Here I may say that Pashich then repaid a compliment which I had paid him many years earlier. In 1897, when in Paris, King Milan and King Alexander communicated to me their intention of entrusting my friend, Dr. Vladan Georgevich, with the formation of a new Government in Serbia; I argued with them that, as the Radicals possessed a great majority in the country, the correct way would be to entrust *them* with the Government. King Milan somewhat impatiently observed: "I really wonder that you don't see that if we gave the Government to the Radicals in less than three years Austria would declare war and occupy the country." King Alexander added: "And you do not seem to know that the leader of the Radicals, Pashich, conspires to replace me by a Russian Grand Duke." I took strong exception to this last statement and assured both Kings that I did not believe it.

To return to King Peter. In consequence of those three accusations—that I demonstrated against him personally by my resignation; that I influenced the British Government to break off diplomatic relations with

Serbia; and that I was working to supersede him on the throne by Prince Arthur of Connaught—King Peter naturally was prejudiced against me. It is true that some of his most devoted friends, in whom he had complete confidence—Lubomir Kalyevich (once Prime Minister), Atza Novakovich (barrister), and Prota Alexa Ilich (the Dean of Belgrade)—repeatedly assured him that these charges were false, yet he hesitated to relinquish his prejudice against me. Those friends urged me to come to Belgrade and have a talk with the King, believing that I could dissipate all his suspicions. I did not care to undertake so long a journey for so insignificant a purpose. But when he went to Paris in 1910 to make his State visit to France I wrote to the Premier of that time, Dr. Milovanovich, that I should like to pay my respects to his Majesty if I were sure he would receive me. The Prime Minister informed me that the King authorised him to say that he would receive me with pleasure.

Received in Paris with the greatest honour as a former French officer who had fought against the Germans in 1870, the King stayed in the Palace of the Quai d'Orsay, the French Foreign Office. And there, after fifty years, I met him again face to face.

The King came to the room in which I had been waiting, and shook my hand very cordially, saying: "Have you forgotten how we used to play ball together? I often recall the happy days of my early youth, and, of course, remember the boys who were my playmates."

There is no need to set out here all our conversation, especially as it was of a rather personal character and did not touch on politics. I told him that I considered it only right and proper to come from London to Paris

to pay my respects as a dutiful subject; and all I wished to beg of him was that he would believe in my loyalty. He assured me that former prejudices had disappeared, as his own best friends had always spoken with the highest appreciation of my character and abilities. He hoped we would in future be as good friends as we had been in the days of boyhood. I congratulated him on his splendid welcome by the French Government and people, and he said that he was perfectly delighted and deeply grateful, and hoped that his visit might have good results for Serbia. I was sincerely glad to witness in his personal triumph the triumph of his people. Taking leave, I desired, in the good old Serbian fashion, to kiss the hand of my King; but he would not allow me to do so, but embraced me and kissed me on the cheek. And so I became reconciled with King Peter.

In the ante-chamber I found the Prime Minister Milovanovich, Prince George (the elder son of King Peter), and Prince Alexander Karageorgevich. Prince George was talking excitedly to the Prime Minister. His face was like a dark cloud hiding lightning and thunder. He left the Minister and, shaking hands with me, said: "How did you find the old ——?" I do not mention his word, which was not very respectful. "And how do you like the way in which I am treated here?"

I had learned of the neglect with which the Prince had been treated by the King, his Prime Minister, and —no doubt as a consequence—by the French Government also. "Yes," I answered; "I have heard something, with great regret; but I always thought you were a brave young man, and, like a philosopher, far above all conventionalities."

"Thank you very much!" the young Prince rejoined; "but Diogenes and his tub are not my ambition!"

I ought to say that I rather liked Prince George, despite his impetuosity and eccentricity. He impressed me by the sincerity and outspokenness of his character. He was absolutely honest, with not the slightest shadow of hypocrisy, which is sometimes called "policy" and sometimes "diplomacy." He won my heart when we first met in London in 1908. "I know of your devotion to the Obrenovich dynasty," he assured me, "but that is only one of your titles to my respect. I myself have always admired the patriotism of Prince Michael Obrenovich III., and I like Queen Nathalie. All I wish is that you should be as good a friend to us also."

On that occasion we spoke on all sorts of questions for more than an hour. Among other things he told me that he believed in God, but not in a life after death, nor in the existence of spirits. He could believe in spirits only if he were to meet one and pinch his or her arm. He wanted me very much to take him to a *séance* with "materialisation." I refused to do so. At that time he was still our heir-apparent, and as he was very sensitive and nervous—I do not mean timid—I dared not expose him to the excitement of a "materialising" sitting. At the end of our prolonged conversation, when I rose to leave, he asked me to tell him frankly what impression he had made on me; and I told him frankly what I thought.

"Well, to speak the plain truth, I carry away with me the impression that we—the people—shall have all sorts of trouble with you as our King. You are a young

man of brilliant intelligence, as King Milan was, and you will be easily tempted to believe that you know everything better than your advisers, as King Milan did; and since you strike me as being more self-willed than King Milan was, we shall in all likelihood have more trouble with you than we had with King Milan. Your temperament impresses me as that of an autocrat and not of a constitutional King."

"Ah! Mr. Mijatovich," he answered, "you are entirely mistaken. I can be, I mean to be, and I will be, a constitutional King. But why could I not, as a constitutional King, be also the leader of my people? If I cannot be the leader of my people I do not want to be their King."

It was a striking phrase, expressed in an arresting and most emphatic manner. I pondered it there and then, staring at him for a while. Then, taking his hand again in mine, I exclaimed:

"Yes; be our leader and guide us to victory!"

Poor Prince George! He will be neither King nor leader. He renounced his right of succession on March 15th, 1909, but he has a place in the history of the Serbian people as an intrepid and recklessly brave, honest and patriotic Prince. With all his faults, I repeat, I liked Prince George.

At the end of 1913 King Peter opened the National Assembly with a speech which, from the political and literary point of view, was one of the finest ever delivered in the history of the Serbian Parliament. In my opinion it was open to only one piece of criticism, but this was of a very grave nature. Peter thanked the soldiers, the officers, the Serbian and the foreign Red

Cross societies, the Serbian and foreign doctors and nurses, and the people for the readiness and cheerfulness with which they had worked and combined to secure victory against the Turks, Bulgars and Albanians. But he forgot to thank God, Who had given him the victory. I did not hesitate to write to the Serbian paper *Pravda* ("Justice") regretting that omission with some comments. My article created a sensation. Almost everybody in Serbia approved of my animadversions, and the Metropolitan and the bishops were well scolded for leaving it to a poor layman to take his King to task for the great oversight.

In the beginning of April, 1914, I went to Belgrade on behalf of the Balkan Agency, Limited. On the day of my arrival I proceeded to inscribe my name in the King's visitors' book and to ask for an audience. Next day I was received by King Peter. He was not in such good health as when I had seen him four years before in Paris. He suffered from gout and needed the support of a stick. But he was nice and cordial to me.

"I am pleased to see you," he began. "Since you attacked me for not thanking God for our victories I have often wished to have an opportunity of explaining the reason for the omission. You have forgotten that I did not write the speech, that I am a constitutional monarch, and that my duty was to accept and read to the Parliament the speech which my responsible Ministers had submitted to me."

"In my opinion, if your Majesty will permit me," I answered, "your first duty was to read carefully the draft of the speech, and you had a right to make suggestions as to the text. You were entitled to say to your Ministers: 'This is a most beautiful speech, but

you have omitted to thank God for our victories. Please let me begin with these words: "Let us thank God for our victories!"' If the Ministers had refused that reasonable amendment, then you would have had to consider whether you would submit to their wishes or ask for their resignations."

"I do not agree with you," the King replied. "I knew my Cabinet had a large majority in the National Assembly and, strictly, I was bound to read to the Deputies the speech which had been prepared for me. But you must not think that I do not sincerely and gratefully feel that we owe our victories to God. You must not think me a man without faith in God. In this regard my warmest thanks are due to my mother, who carefully planted the seed of faith in my young heart. She taught me to pray to God. If you will come to my bedroom you will see there, near my bed and in front of holy eikons, my *prie-Dieu*. I pray every morning and evening to God. And not only I myself, but I can assure you that there is not a single officer, not a single private soldier in our army, who does not believe in God and does not say: 'Thank God for our victories!' The war has re-awakened and intensified the religious faith of our people."

I felt exceedingly thankful to hear all this from King Peter's lips. When he spoke of his mother I had a vision of the good Princess Persida, seated in her chair in the back part of the church reserved for women, behind all sorts and conditions of men standing in front of her. I felt somewhat moved and sat silent, looking at him. A thought flashed through my brain: "This man, who speaks so tenderly and so gratefully of his mother, and who prays to God every morning and

every evening, cannot have had anything to do with the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga."

Some days later I was interviewed by the editor of the *Balkan*, one of the most influential newspapers in Belgrade. He asked me what I thought of the international situation in Europe. I told him, and he published the following statement, which I give here in tabloid form:

The political sky of Europe at this moment (April, 1914) seems to be cloudless, but the actual situation of our part of the world is extremely dangerous. Both great groups know that a conflict is inevitable, but they desire to delay the general war by trying to maintain a sort of equilibrium, which is so delicate that the slightest incident may upset it and spread ruin over Europe. I cannot say when the war will come. It may come at any moment. It may come in forty-eight hours, but when it comes it will come suddenly. Of course we cannot stand aloof when Europe is plunged into a general war. Our people's place is by the side of the Entente Powers.

Two days after the appearance of that interview, which produced a great sensation, King Peter sent for me.

"Yankovich [his private secretary] has read to me your interview in the *Balkan*. Have you been correctly reported?"

I assured his Majesty that this was the case.

"And you believe that a general war may come soon and suddenly?"

"War is inevitable," I answered, "and will come

suddenly. As I stated, it may come in forty-eight hours."

"It will be terrible for us," the King said, looking very grave and almost shocked. "The war against the Turks in 1912, and that against the Bulgars and Albanians in 1913, have exhausted us economically and financially, and our army wants reorganising and re-equipment. We are on the point of ordering 300,000 rifles from England which cannot be delivered for three years. We need peace for seven years if only to recover. Do you think we will have seven years' peace?"

"I cannot tell you, but I think Europe will not have seven years' peace."

"May we look for three years' peace?"

"How can I possibly say? My belief is that Germany will precipitate the war, and therefore it may come at any moment."

"It will be simply dreadful if a great European conflagration be started before we have rested, re-equipped, and reorganised ourselves. I hope you are entirely wrong in your reading of the European situation."

"I assure your Majesty that I heartily wish I may be wrong."

King Peter was upset by what I had told him, and I regretted I had caused him so much alarm. Three months later the declaration of war by Austria-Hungary against Serbia and by Germany against Russia and France proved that I was not mistaken in my appreciation of the European situation.

Only a few weeks after my return to London I received a letter from my friend, Dean Alexa Ilich,

saying that King Peter wished to see me on a very important matter, and that I must be ready to leave London on receipt of an invitation from the Prime Minister Pashich. It happened that about the middle of June three directors of the Balkan Agency, who were then in Belgrade, wired to me to come to assist them in a business undertaking. So I went to Belgrade again on the affairs of the Balkan Agency, and, of course, immediately on my arrival I craved an audience of the King.

His Majesty, although walking with more difficulty than when I had seen him in the spring, met me with great cordiality and even kissed me on the cheek. We spoke on many topics, more especially on the possibility of developing the commercial relations between Serbia and Great Britain. After some time he rose from his chair and said, "I wished to speak to you on an important subject, to propose a sphere of usefulness in which you could do great service to the Serbs, a service which, I am told and believe, you could render better than many others. Unfortunately, I am suffering at present from a bad attack of rheumatism and I feel tired. But see the Crown Prince at once, and he will tell you all about it on my behalf." He then ordered an aide-de-camp to conduct me to the Crown Prince.

Alexander was evidently waiting for me in the salon to which I was brought. He walked quickly towards me, embraced me, and kissed me as his father had done. In agreeable astonishment I remarked, "Your Royal Highness, I am grateful for such a reception, but what does this great honour mean?"

"Come, sit here and I will tell you. This 'great honour,' as you call it, is a preliminary to a far greater one. My father, myself, Mr. Pashich [the Prime

Minister], Mr. L. Yovanovich [the Minister of Education and Church Affairs], all the Cabinet Ministers, and Andra Nikolich [the President of the National Assembly] have unanimously agreed to offer you the Archbishopric of Uskub. Nor is that all. We are negotiating with the Patriarch of Constantinople for the re-establishment of the ancient Patriarchate of Serbia, and have really a very good chance of restoring that dignity. You, as the Archbishop of Uskub, would have every prospect of being elected the Patriarch of the Serbian National Church. I should be very happy if I could greet you one day as our Patriarch."

I was dumbfounded and looked at the Crown Prince in utter astonishment, unable to say a word. Then I crossed myself, as we Serbs do when we are wondering at some unexpected and extraordinary thing.

"Pray tell me, your Royal Highness, who was the first to suggest my being made Archbishop?"

"I think the proposal came simultaneously from two independent persons—from Andra Nikolich, the President of the Skupshtina, and from Father Nikolay Velimirovich. And it took by storm everyone to whom it was mentioned. You are universally respected as a learned, upright and religious man; you are beloved for your kindness of heart, and everybody knows that you are poor because you are honest."

"But everybody does not know how weak I am. People know that I have faith in God, but, although in a limited sense a religious man, I am quite a modern, and doubt whether I could ever be a good ecclesiastic. But what your Royal Highness has told me has stunned me, and I am unable to give you any answer."

"We do not want your answer here and now," the

Crown Prince said. "Naturally, you will want time to consider this offer. Mr. Pashich and Mr. Yovanovich will speak with you in a day or two, and then you can consider the question from all standpoints."

Leaving the Palace deeply moved, I remembered that, several years ago, a remarkable clairvoyante, Mrs. Julia Burchell, of Bradford, told me that by and by my country would offer me a position much higher than any I had ever occupied, and second only to that of King. And her vision was amazingly fulfilled by the offer just made that I should become Archbishop of Uskub and eventually the Patriarch of all the Serbs.

I had to sustain a hard inward struggle. Knowing well what a mission the Church has in every nation, and more especially among the Serbs, I was sorely tempted to accept the offer and try to show the people what a "modern" Archbishop could accomplish. I thought I could combine the most attractive qualities of the Anglican bishops with the best attributes of the Roman Catholic bishops, and inspire the Serbian Orthodox Church with the true spirit of Christ. I began to draw up a programme of my activity as Archbishop, to show myself a Grand Seigneur with those who were powerful and wealthy, and to open my Palace to every poor, troubled, suffering man and woman, and to deserve to be called their brother and father in Christ. And how helpful I could be as Archbishop or Patriarch to the State, and, in the political sphere, what social reforms could I not inaugurate! I had never had in my life a more glorious opportunity of serving God and my country.

But how could I accept the position of visible Head of the Serbian Orthodox Church when I did not believe

in all the dogmas of our Church? When I urged that as my principal reason for refusing the offer in my interview with the members of the Government, one of the Ministers said, "But who asks you what you are and how much you believe? Do you think that every bishop believes all the dogmas of the Church?"

But time-serving, "bowing and scraping" were repugnant to me. I told them that as a politician and diplomatist I had sometimes to move as on a stage and play the part of an actor, but that I could not transform the church into a stage nor be an actor in the sight of God. I might mislead the people into thinking that I had an honest faith in all the dogmas of our Church, but my hypocrisy could not mislead God, and how could I raise my eyes to Him in prayer? No, I preferred to remain for the rest of my life a poor man rather than wear an archbishop's mitre, studded with pearls and diamonds, and live in an archbishop's palace as a hypocrite. So I definitely declined the offer.

But I was touched by the generosity of King Peter towards me. He knew that I was a devoted friend of King Milan and the Obrenovich dynasty, knew that I had signed the so-called Secret Convention with Austria; he even believed for some time that I was his personal enemy (which I never was), and yet he offered me the highest dignity in the land.

CHAPTER XI

My Boldest Political Effort

THAT the reader may understand fully what I look upon as my boldest political effort I must indulge in a few preliminary historical remarks.

Shumadia was and still is the name of that part of Serbia which lies between the river Save and the Danube in the north, the Western Morava in the south, the Drina in the west, and the Morava in the east. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the area was covered by oak and beech forests, which circumstance gave it the name Shumadia, which in Serb means "forest land" or "woodland."

Early in 1804 the Serbs of Shumadia rose in open revolt against their Turkish oppressors and, at a general assembly, elected George Petrovich of Topola, whom the Turks called Karageorge ("Black George"), as their leader. Under Karageorge's leadership the Serbs, joined by many volunteers from Bosnia, Montenegro, and Macedonia, fought bravely and successfully from 1804 up to the beginning of 1813, cleared the country entirely of Turks, and organised, more or less roughly, something akin to a modern State.

But when the Russians, under the pressure of Napoleon's invasion, had to conclude a hasty peace with Turkey in 1812 at Bucharest, they forgot to stipulate for the protection of the Serbs, who practically were their allies. All the Turkish forces which had fought

against the Russians on the Danube, being now released for other mischief, marched suddenly against the exhausted army of Karageorge. He, who never took the title of Prince—although the people, and even the Sultan, offered him that dignity—but called himself always "Leader of the Nation" (*Vozhd Naroda*), had to leave Serbia in the beginning of 1813, accompanied by most of the prominent military and political leaders of the nation, and seek refuge in Russia.

Milosh Obrenovich (the *voyvode*, or governor of Rudnik) was the only conspicuous leader who remained behind. Constituting himself a political chief of the people, he managed to arrange a tolerable *modus vivendi* between the vanquished Serbs of Shumadia and the Sultan's representatives. While Karageorge was a born soldier, Milosh was a born politician and diplomatist. It is true he organised and led the second Serb insurrection against the Turks in the spring of 1815, but after a few victories he eagerly accepted their offer to make peace and give the people something like self-government. Serbia, under Milosh in 1817, had already won its autonomy by the efforts of her own people unaided by anyone, but Russia (as I have already noted) placed that autonomy under the protection of the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829. Milosh became the first Prince (*Knyaz*) of autonomous Serbia, obtained from the Sultan Mahmud II. the hereditary right for his family to the throne of Serbia, and established a formal reigning dynasty in Serbia—the Obrenovich.

Unfortunately, the first days of autonomy were darkened by a crime the consequences of which, like a dark shadow, have projected themselves through the modern history of Serbia. Karageorge, impulsive as

ever, suddenly left his Serb co-refugees in Bessarabia and appeared, quite alone, in Serbia. Nobody knew why he had turned up. Most people thought that he—a known hater of the Turks and one who wished to see Serbia entirely independent—came to stir up a new revolution. Milosh always assured his friends that the Pasha of Belgrade demanded from him (Milosh) the head of Karageorge, or otherwise all the concessions and promises of autonomy would be cancelled. Probably the Pasha made such a demand on Milosh, but it is clear that Karageorge was murdered (July 27th, 1817) at the order of Milosh, who in that way got rid of his only possible rival.

Between 1836 and 1839 Prince Milosh—a man of remarkable initiative and boldness—began to agitate against the interference of Serbia's protector (Russia) in her home affairs, and persuaded Lord Palmerston to send to Serbia Colonel Hodges as the first British Consul-General to that country. Russia, alarmed at the growing influence of Colonel Hodges with Prince Milosh, joined with Milosh's numerous political enemies and forced him to abdicate and leave Serbia (1839). Milosh's elder son Milan became the second Prince of Serbia (Obrenovich II.), but died within a few months and was succeeded by his younger brother Michael (Obrenovich III.). But the men who had compelled Milosh to abdicate were apprehensive of the influence of old Milosh on his younger son, and fomented a revolt which ended in the exile of Prince Michael in 1842 and the proclamation of the younger son of Karageorge (Alexander Karageorgevich) as Prince of Serbia. The elder son of Karageorge then happened to be away in Russia, but his brother Alexander, a handsome young

officer, whom Prince Michael had attached to his person as one of his aides-de-camp, was at hand in Belgrade and profited accordingly.

While Prince Alexander Karageorgevich was on the throne the friends of the Obrenovich dynasty constantly agitated to depose him and restore Milosh. They succeeded in 1859, when Prince Alexander Karageorgevich was expelled and the old Milosh Obrenovich recalled to the throne. He died in the following year, and his son Michael ascended the throne for the second time.

From 1859 until 1903 reigned the Obrenovich dynasty. During that period the friends of the Karageorgevich dynasty were working to get rid of the Obrenovich line and replace it by the eldest son of Prince Alexander, Prince Peter Karageorgevich. Although they assassinated (June 10th, 1868) the patriotic and generous Prince Michael Obrenovich III., they effected no change of dynasty.

But the unending necessity for the friends of each dynasty to watch the friends of the other to prevent or suppress conspiracies absorbed much of the activity and energy of Government, which otherwise would have been devoted to important national interests. All thinking men deplored the calamity that such a small country as Serbia should have two dynasties, one on the throne and the other in exile, the friends of the latter constantly working to bring it back to the throne. I hardly need say that I was one of the politicians who lamented my country's ill fortune.

After this hasty excursion into the history of modern Serbia I will now come to the actual subject of this chapter.

After a spell of strenuous work from October, 1880,

I obtained, in the spring of 1882, leave of absence for a month in Venice. But on my arrival in Vienna, on my way to Venice, the Serbian Minister in Vienna, my personal friend Milan Boghichevich, handed me a ciphered dispatch from the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pirotyanats. I was desired to stop in Vienna to await the arrival from Petrograd of Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, to see the Prince and ask him whether it was true that he had promised to give his eldest daughter, Princess Zorka, to Peter Karageorgevich as his wife.

Relations between Prince Michael of Serbia and Prince Nicholas of Montenegro and their Governments were good between 1860 and 1868. There was a secret treaty between the two Serb Princes for joint action against Turkey for the liberation of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Old Serbia (Kossovo vilayet). Prince Michael had acted, by proxy, as godfather to that very Princess Zorka who, according to rumours, was to become the wife of Peter Karageorgevich the Pretender. But since the accession of Milan (Obrenovich IV.) the relations between the two Serb Sovereigns had gradually gone from bad to worse.

Several years later I asked King Milan what was the reason for his mistrust of King Nicholas. Came the answer: "There are several reasons for my contempt, but the principal one is this: I have read the copy of a recent treaty between him and the Tsar Alexander III. by which Nicholas consented to act as hereditary Governor of the Russian province of Montenegro."

When I inquired whether the copy he had read was a faithful rendering of the original, he only answered

that he had no reason to doubt it. I dare say King Nicholas could take a similar line of argument to explain his own animosity against King Milan.

Unfortunately, to my knowledge, several politicians and officers in Serbia shared King Milan's animosity against Prince Nicholas. I personally regretted that hostility, and often tried to induce King Milan, at least for political reasons, to show more consideration for Prince Nicholas's susceptibilities. I drew his attention to the wily policy of Austria. Although the Emperor and his Government knew that Nicholas was entirely pro-Russian, with the special duty of attacking Austria when Russia should attack her, yet whenever he passed through Vienna on his way to and from Petrograd he was always treated as the Emperor's guest, and his hotel bills were paid by the Austrian Court.

Although it was notorious in Balkan political circles that I was a determined opponent of Russian Panslavism and the Prince was known to be an enthusiastic adherent, I rather admired Nicholas. He was a poet, a clever political actor, and, notwithstanding his Russian Panslavism, a Serbian patriot. Just as I did not hesitate, at my first audience with the Emperor Francis Joseph, to defend Jovan Ristich, whom his Majesty pronounced to be more a Russian than a Serbian, so I never hesitated to defend Prince Nicholas against King Milan and a gang in Belgrade. Probably Prince Nicholas was aware of that fact. At any rate I gratefully acknowledge that he always treated me with the greatest courtesy, almost with friendship. In 1879 he even desired me to undertake the higher education of his eldest son, Prince Danilo, the heir to the throne. For personal reasons I

had to decline that honour and responsibility. Of course that was some time before I signed my Secret Convention with Austria-Hungary.

Nicholas must have heard that I was in Vienna, because immediately on his arrival at the Goldenes Lamm Hotel, in the Leopoldstadt, where he always stayed, he sent an equerry to invite me to dine with him that evening and to come half an hour before dinner for a talk. I did as requested.

Prince Nicholas began by airing a grievance against King Milan. "Why did he surprise me by proclaiming himself King of Serbia? Am I not the Sovereign of a portion of the Serb territory, just as Milan is the Sovereign of another portion? The proclamation of the kingdom is an affair in which the whole Serb nation is concerned. Milan ought to have confided to me his intention and, in brotherly confidence, asked me what I thought about it. He treated me as if Montenegro and its Prince were utter strangers, as if we were *quantité négligeable*. Such treatment from my brother Milan pained me very much indeed."

I tried to explain our conduct by the propriety of keeping the matter secret until it became *fait accompli*, and also by the natural assumption on the part of King Milan and his Government that he (Prince Nicholas), as a patriotic Serb, would be only too pleased to see the old dignity restored to our country.

It was obvious that Prince Nicholas intensely disliked Milan's assumption of the regal title.

As I had already ascertained at the Austrian Foreign Office that the engagement of Prince Peter Karageorgevich to Princess Zorka was true and final—the Tsar himself promising to give the Princess a dowry of one

million roubles—I at once passed to the real object of my visit.

"Of course, your Highness and King Milan are Serb Sovereigns together leading the Serb nation to a better future. Of course, the Serb nation has a right to expect that you two shall act as brothers. I will admit that it would have been more correct had King Milan consulted you confidentially about the eventual proclamation of the kingdom. But nobody in the Serb nation could dream that that proclamation would ever be disagreeable to you. But now we hear that your Highness has consented to give your daughter, Princess Zorka, in marriage to Prince Peter Karageorgevich, Pretender to the Serbian throne, the avowed opponent and rival—not to say enemy —of King Milan. No Serb could consider that engagement as a friendly act towards the King of Serbia."

"It is perfectly true," the Prince returned in a lively fashion, "that my daughter Zorka has been engaged to Prince Peter. I knew that that act might be hostilely interpreted in Belgrade, so the moment I heard you were in Vienna I sent for you. You are a man without prejudices and a devoted friend of King Milan. I want your assistance to dissipate possible resentment on the part of the Court of Belgrade. My daughter's betrothal does not imply the slightest hostile design against King Milan and his dynasty. One of the conditions on which I consented to accept Prince Peter as my son-in-law was that he must give up all agitation against King Milan in Serbia. He promised to do so. But for greater security I asked him to consent to live permanently at Cettigne, so to say, under my own eyes. At Cettigne, from my capital and under my watchful care, he will never be concerned in any undertaking

inimical to King Milan. The engagement of my daughter to Prince Peter, far from being a hostile act, is really a friendly one towards the Obrenovich dynasty. My daughter is not marrying a Pretender; she is marrying a Prince who is every inch a Prince, but who, settling down to a married life, has renounced all adventures.

"What guarantee can I offer for the sincerity of all I have told you? I have been thinking of that, and I have arrived at this decision. As you know, King Milan's uncle, Prince Michael, was Zorka's godfather; now the rights and duties of sponsor have passed on to King Milan, and as, according to the views and customs of our people, it is his right and duty to act as *venchani kum* to Zorka, I wish you to wire to him that I formally and solemnly invite him to be the *venchani kum* at the wedding of Zorka with Prince Peter Karageorgevich."

Kumstvo, the sponsorship, is a peculiarly sacred institution among the Serbs. The *kum*, the "sponsor" or "godfather," is respected almost as much as a real father. If the godchild attains marriageable age and is going to be married, he must ask his godfather to be his *venchani kum*, the chief witness at the ceremony. If the godfather is dead, then his son, or the nearest relation, must be invited to perform the duties of *venchani kum*. The relationship is considered so sacred that the children of the godfather and godchild cannot intermarry. A national ballad quotes, amongst the misdeeds by which "the cursed country India" drew on herself the displeasure and wrath of God and the saints, "that a *kum* prosecutes his *kum* before the judges and bears false witness against him."

I was agreeably surprised and impressed by his suggestion. He spoke eloquently and with such emphasis

that I could not suspect him of insincerity. I promised, as in duty bound, to wire to King Milan in cipher that very night his formal invitation to be *venchani kum* at the wedding of Princess Zorka and Prince Peter.

Our talk was held before dinner. During dinner the Prince spoke all the time about the greatness and splendour of Russia. He was the guest of Austria, and the great dinner (with the choicest wines), which we both heartily enjoyed, was paid for by the Emperor Francis Joseph; yet he told me how Austria would be crushed and submerged as by a new flood "when once the waves of the great Slav sea of the White Tsar should break their boundaries and inundate Galicia and Hungary."

After dinner he took me into his private sitting-room and read to me the manuscript of his now famous drama, *The Empress of the Balkans*. He wished to have my opinion on this, his greatest poetical effort.

"You ought not to have asked for my opinion," I told him when he had finished reading, "because in no way can I pretend to be an expert critic of the drama. But as you wish to have my opinion, here it is: Your drama is not drama at all; it has much lyrical poetry of great beauty, and it has many interesting political discussions and even political programmes. Your 'Balkan Empress' tells me what I already knew —that you are a good lyrical poet, but a better and greater Serb patriot."

"With equal frankness I will tell you that you have disappointed me. But as you gave me some consolation, I thank you." And with these words the Prince rose, gave me a hearty handshake, and we parted.

On my return to my hotel I found my friend

Boghichevich waiting for me. He helped me to cipher a long dispatch to King Milan, reporting the full and exact offer of Prince Nicholas, and asking him not to decide anything until he had received my written report.

That night I wrote a memorandum for King Milan, trying to show him what joy and advantage would ensue to the entire Serb nation if the two rival dynasties were to be reconciled, and with what glory he would cover himself if, by rising superior to prejudice, he could, by his inborn generosity, achieve that reconciliation. I discussed the possible objection that Nicholas had not made his offer in good faith. I showed that even in such a case King Milan would not lose anything, whereas Prince Nicholas would be caught in his own trap and his bad faith be exposed to the whole world.

In about five days I received a letter from our Prime Minister, Mr. Pirotyanatz. "Both the King and I read your memorandum with astonishment. The King asks me to tell you in his name that, although he knew that your lively imagination landed you often in uninhabitable islands of Utopia, he never thought you capable of such quixotism as your memorandum displays. For my own part, I remind you that the third Article of the Constitution of 1869 declared the dynasty Karageorgevich cursed by the entire nation for ever. My dear colleague, you seem to have forgotten that important Article of the Constitution."

I abandoned my projected journey to Venice, and returned to Belgrade to discuss the question with the King and the Prime Minister. I told them that although I understood the excitement of the people against the Karageorgevich dynasty, after some of the relatives and

friends of that dynasty had in 1868 murdered such a patriotic Prince as Michael Obrenovich III., yet the Regents and other Serbian statesmen ought never to have allowed such a monstrosity as the national curse to become an article of the Constitution. I was sure that the National Assembly, which was competent to change the Constitution, would by acclamation vote the exclusion of that curse from the Constitution. But it was no use arguing. The King, backed up by the Premier, rejected the conclusions of my memorandum as to the reconciliation of the two Serbian dynasties.

CHAPTER XII

The Last Obrenovich

I MUST make some hard and unpalatable statements about King Alexander, and I owe it to fair play and justice to advance everything I can truthfully say in his defence.

I was enthusiastically devoted to his father, King Milan, because, although not by any means perfectly balanced, he was a man of brilliant intellect, a born politician, a patriot, a man with fine artistic instincts and a warm and generous heart. Throughout the prolonged Press campaign of calumny he became the *enfant terrible* of Europe. I was grieved to see him treat his wife with hatred and cruelty, more especially as he behaved to no one else in like manner. But notwithstanding this bad asset to his moral account, I worshipped him as my King and loved him as a friend, finding always the amiable features of his character largely preponderating over his failings.

Poor King Alexander I could neither worship nor love. I loved him indeed while he was a delightful wee laddie, full of brilliant impulse and childlike mischief. But even in his sixth year he shocked me and led me to ask myself, "Who is this cruel little boy? What soul has he?" This is what happened then:

In September, 1882, King Milan, arriving from abroad, was shot at by Hélène Markovich, the widow of Lieutenant-Colonel Jephrem Markovich, executed for

an alleged attempt at revolution. The attack in the cathedral, though made less than three feet from the King, did not succeed. The King and Queen returned to the Palace, accompanied by the members of the Cabinet. "Little Sasha" came to me and my colleague, General Tesha Nikolich, the War Minister, and asked us what had happened to cause his "pappa" to change his uniform to go back to the church. General Nikolich took him on his knee and told him that a woman tried to kill his "pappa." The little boy's face grew pale; he slipped down from the General's knees, and clenching his fists, screamed in a perfect rage, "Tesha, go at once and catch that wicked woman, cut her up into small pieces and throw them into that deep well in the garden!"

When on February 22nd (O.S.), 1889, half an hour before the formal abdication of King Milan, he was informed by his father that he was about to be proclaimed King of Serbia, he evinced no surprise, no shock, no regret, no joy. He simply said: "Very well, pappa." At the great scene of the abdication in the New Palace, when everybody was deeply moved, and old State Officers, Ministers and soldiers were weeping, Sasha, then in his thirteenth year, was absolutely unmoved, cool and self-possessed. On the return to the Old Palace King Milan told me how splendidly his boy had behaved. I informed the ex-King frankly that the youth's indifference to everything that was said and was happening shocked me too much to cause admiration of his demeanour. The faculty of not betraying by the expression of his face what he was thinking or feeling was one of the remarkable features of his character. His face was the face of a Sphinx.

Of course—and this I can plead in his defence as an extenuating circumstance—his childhood and upbringing had been poisoned, in the most critical years, by the unhappy and often unseemly conduct of his parents. His father and mother hated each other, brought their quarrels to the market-place of Europe and made them a public scandal of which even their most devoted subjects and friends were ashamed. They both pretended to love their boy and fought for the possession of his body and affection, but all their actions and the means they used only destroyed the boy's love for them. The greatest tragedy of King Milan and Queen Nathalie consisted in the very fact that they tried to win the love of their son, each to the exclusion of the other, and both lost it. I would have been tempted to say even that their individual tragedies led indirectly, and at least in a certain measure, to the terrible tragedy of King Alexander's assassination, did I not believe in fate and destiny. Alexander would have died a violent death had his parents been ideal parents and had he enjoyed the very best education.

But he was not fortunate enough to enjoy even an ordinary education, much less the very best. His father was his first political educator, and he taught him political pessimism. He taught him not to believe anybody, to distrust professions of loyalty, and to think that he was surrounded by traitors and conspirators. Other teachers developed the logical consequences of such a dark conception of his position; he became very reserved, often silent, and when he spoke his words formed only a curtain to his true meaning. He grew extremely selfish, and, to attain his objects, did not

scruple to use all kind of means, moral and immoral. He was born with a predisposition to cruelty, and the Serbian throne, placed in the midst of the surging waves of a fierce struggle between rival dynasties, seems only to have strengthened that predisposition.

His first political act deepened my anxiety for his own and his country's future. The Regency was to last five years, until the young King would reach his eighteenth year in 1894. The Regency, although composed of three most able statesmen, had a very hard task. The difficulties were accentuated when the third Regent, General Kosta Protich, died in 1892. The great question arose who was to replace him. Both Mr. Ristich and General Belimarkovich were Liberals and wished that a Liberal statesman or politician should be chosen, ensuring thereby the harmonious working of the Regency. But the Radical party had a majority in the National Assembly, and they and the Radical Government wished that their leader, Nicola Pashich, should be appointed third Regent.

Now, both Mr. Ristich and General Belimarkovich thought that their Liberal party alone was by tradition, sentiment and interest wholly devoted to the Obrenovich dynasty, whereas the Radical party contained many members well known as the adherents of the exiled Karageorgevich dynasty. They therefore dismissed the Radical Cabinet, formed a Liberal Cabinet under Mr. Ribarats, authorised it to dissolve the Assembly and cause a new election. The electoral campaign was very bitter and its results were uncertain, each of the contending parties claiming a slight majority. Just as this question was to be settled in favour of the Liberal Government (by a "trick," as the Radicals asserted)

the young King invited the Regents and the Cabinet Ministers to dinner at the Palace.

They were all still at table when Colonel Tyirich approached the King and whispered to him a few words. Immediately the King rose and, without the slightest emotion, said: "Gentlemen, at this very moment the garrison of Belgrade has proclaimed me of age. As such I assume at once the active exercise of the Royal power. I thank you, my Regents up to now, and you, gentlemen of the Cabinet, for the services you have rendered to the country, and release you from further duty. I am going at once to take the oath of the Army, and you will remain here for this night as my guests or my prisoners. During my short absence you will obey the orders of my first aide-de-camp, Colonel Tyirich."

It was an audacious *coup d'état*, absolutely unconstitutional and indisputably immoral. It was successful and therefore enthusiastically approved by the Radical majority of the Serbian people. Its boldness and neat execution pleased even the sporting instincts of the British public and British Press. Many people enjoyed the scene in which the smooth-faced youth outwitted his grey-bearded Regents and councillors. I was shocked and saddened. I thought the King of Serbia ought to act in all circumstances as a true and noble knight. The first public act of the young King (then only in his seventeenth year) showed an utter disregard not only of the simplest rules of chivalry, but also of the respect of the host for his invited guests. What could the country expect in later years from a King who, in his early youth, was capable of such meanness?

I was then living in London as a journalist and

literary man, but I wrote and told many a friend how I deplored the young King's action. When, in 1894, one of these friends, wishing to injure me, published my letters in the Serbian papers—I then being Minister of Finance and temporarily Minister of Foreign Affairs —King Alexander asked me: "Is it possible you wrote such a sharp condemnation of my *coup d'état?*"

"Certainly, Sire, I did write several letters, disapproving of your act."

"But the Radicals greeted it enthusiastically, and your own political friends, the Progressists, approved of it."

"I know it," I said; "but judging your action only as an independent man and devoted servant of your Majesty and of your dynasty, I regretted, and shall never cease to regret, your action."

"You are a strange fellow. You are not a politician at all, but a monk who has lost his way to his convent and come by blind chance to my Court and Government."

Shortly after this conversation I had to resign my post as Cabinet Minister, and was sent to Bucharest as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.

From Bucharest I was transferred to London in the beginning of 1895, and at the beginning of 1900 had to go to Constantinople. On my way from London to Belgrade I stopped a few days in Vienna and went to the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office to see Count Goluchowsky, who—if the reader will permit me to anticipate a later chapter—as Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, helped me (in 1882) very efficiently to save the Serbian Railway bonds from the ruins of the

Union Générale of M. Bontoux, and ensure the uninterrupted construction of the Serbian railways. The Count was pleased to see me, especially as he wished to convey to King Alexander a private and confidential message.

"Will you tell his Majesty, as well as King Milan, that we think that King Alexander should marry without further delay? As long as he remains the only representative of the dynasty, unmarried and without an heir, he tempts his enemies to make him the last Obrenovich. The moment he has an heir this peril will be lessened. I spoke to him of that danger when he was here last summer. He said he was aware it was desirable he should be married as soon as possible, and that he was ready to marry at once, provided that he met a Princess who would attract him by her beauty and charms, and at the same time be highly cultured, rich, and connected with at least one of the first Courts of Europe.

"Now, it is impossible to find such a fairy Princess as King Alexander desires. And even if we were to find her, such a beautiful, attractive, highly-cultured, wealthy and well-connected Princess might not be eager to accept King Alexander for a husband. But the Emperor William has succeeded in discovering a young Princess who would make an excellent Queen, besides combining almost all the conditions required by King Alexander. She is beautiful, highly-cultured [*hochgebildet*], and closely connected with several great Courts. She lacks only one of Alexander's conditions—she is not wealthy. There is no other Princess in Europe more worthy to be Queen of Serbia. As the German Emperor has already prepared the ground, all that is now neces-

sary is that King Alexander should make his formal proposal. Please convey that message from me to the King, and use your influence to induce him to act in accordance with the advice of the Emperor of Austria and the German Emperor."

On my arrival in Belgrade I delivered Count Goluchowsky's message to King Alexander in the presence of King Milan and the Prime Minister, Dr. Vladan Georgevich. The King said to me, speaking with emphasis and solemnity, "I have already promised my father and my Prime Minister that I will be married this year. I had decided this before they intimated to me that they would leave me if I did not marry, at latest, by the end of this year. But I declare to them again, and in your hearing, as a witness, that I intend to marry this year, and much earlier than the end of the year. Did Goluchowsky tell you the name of the Princess?"

I answered in the negative.

"But we know whom he meant. Now listen to the plans I have made. My father must go to Carlsbad for his usual cure. You see what a physical wreck Vladan the Giant has made of himself by his indefatigable service to his King and country. He must go abroad to rest and visit the Paris Exhibition before he returns. When Vladan comes back I will then join my father at Carlsbad and go with him to see the young Princess and eventually become engaged to her."

I dined at the Palace a few days later, and after dinner King Alexander took me, together with his father and Dr. Vladan, to his sanctum for a smoke and chat. After we had been served with coffee and the servants had left, King Milan said to his son: "Will you not

ask Chedo [he always called me by my Christian name] what impressions he has formed concerning the political situation? I know people of all parties (and among them several highly suspicious ones) went to see him, and, of course, they all spoke on politics."

King Alexander turned to me: "Come, Mr. Mijatovich, tell us what conclusions you have come to from your intercourse with so many politicians in Belgrade."

"I intended," I answered, "speaking to my chief, Dr. Vladan Georgevich, about it, and now I can submit the report of my impressions to him in your presence. I certainly have had interviews with several Progressist, Liberal and Radical politicians, and thus far I have arrived at this conclusion—that you three are gaily and boldly skating on thin ice without being aware that it is thin, and may break under you at any moment."

King Milan, in great surprise, exclaimed, "Tiens! Oh, indeed!"

Dr. Vladan, my old chum, also exclaimed, "Oh! Oh!" and added, "What an impertinent fellow you are to describe us as three fools!"

King Alexander, imperturbable as always, did not say a word, but stared at me, as though trying silently to penetrate the true meaning of my words.

Pressed by King Milan and Dr. Vladan to explain myself, I told them that nobody seemed to be satisfied with Vladan's régime of "Red i Rad" ("Order and Work"), that the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Mansuroff, was very active in his interviews with the leaders of the Opposition, and that an uncomfortable and uneasy feeling that a sudden change was imminent was pervading the political atmosphere. I did not tell

them that I had been assured that the King's mistress, Madame Draga Mashin, was a secret agent of Russia, and that Mr. Mansuroff went almost every day to see her, often meeting King Alexander there. I must confess that I did not attach much importance to this part of my information. Certainly I had not the slightest suspicion what those meetings of King Alexander with Mr. Mansuroff in the boudoir of Madame Mashin really did mean.

I left Belgrade for Constantinople in the beginning of April; King Milan went to Carlsbad about the end of May, and the Prime Minister, Dr. Vladan Georgevich, a few days later to Paris.

On the 20th of June the *Official Gazette* of Serbia announced that King Alexander had become engaged to Madame Draga Mashin, *née* Lunyevitsa, and that the Tsar of All the Russias had consented to act as *kum* (the principal witness) at their wedding. Now it is known that at the same time orders had been given to the police and military authorities not to allow King Milan and Dr. Vladan to cross the frontier to Serbia. It was even rumoured that King Alexander personally ordered the commander of the Royal Guard, Colonel Kumrich, to shoot King Milan if he should try to enter Serbia.

I did not conceal from the members of the Legation that I deplored our King's marriage with Madame Mashin, and that I did not expect from it any good, either for the nation or the dynasty. Someone reported to the new Queen what my opinions were, and King Alexander wrote to tell me that, in view of my opposition to the marriage, he could not leave me in charge

of such an important Legation, but offered to make me President of the Council of State. I declined the offer, but the King agreed to place me *en disponibilité*, and gave me permission to take my sick wife abroad.

On my way from Constantinople to Abbazia, having to pass through Belgrade I stopped there for a week, went to the Palace to pay my respects to the King and the new Queen, and was well received. It happened that two or three days before my departure from Belgrade, the *Official Gazette* brought a communiqué from the Court, in which the King's mother, Queen Nathalie, was violently attacked, abused and menaced by I know not what repressive measures. Everybody knew that this unworthy attack was made by King Alexander, at the instigation of Queen Draga, who felt offended by certain allusions on an open post card sent by Queen Nathalie to a friend in Belgrade. Every fair-minded man and woman in Belgrade resented the King's insult to his mother.

Having made preparations for my departure, I went to the Palace to take leave of the King. After conversation on the political situation of our country and of Europe in general, I rose to leave, and, while still standing, addressed the King thus:

"Sire, I have been honoured by the friendship of your father and by your own—if I may be permitted to say so—just because I proved my devotion to him and to you by always telling, frankly and truthfully, what I thought to be in the very best interests of yourself, the dynasty and the country. It may be that I shall never return to Serbia, nor have another opportunity of speaking to you. I wish, therefore, that my last words to you should be the words of a true and

devoted servant. Sire, you do not treat your parents well. You behaved badly to your father, and you treat your mother in a manner which equitable men must deem harsh. Sire, children who treat their parents badly never end well. My last words to you are: for God's sake—and for your own—mend your ways towards your parents, and do not treat your mother so cruelly as you did in that official communiqué three days ago."

"So you think it proper," the young King answered, "at a meeting which, you say yourself, may be our last, to appear before me with the Ten Commandments of Moses! Why do you preach to me?"

"Sire," I replied, "Moses, out of his wide experience of men and nations, found that children who did not respect their parents never prospered. Again I urge you to mend your ways towards your parents and not to be so cruel to your own mother."

"My dear monk, go to my father and mother and teach them to mend their ways towards me," the King retorted. "You do not know how harshly they treat me."

"Even supposing they do," I said, "they are your parents, and as their son—and their only son—you ought to have every consideration for them."

"My father used to say, 'Chedo must always have the last word.' Have you had your last word?"

"Sire, I have nothing more to say. May God bless you and help you!" And I took his proffered right hand and kissed it. He was not a good son, but he was my King.

Why do I describe this scene and the conversation which I had with King Alexander in November, 1900?

My readers will see the reason presently, when they read the account of the most extraordinary experience of my life.

In the summer of 1901 I had to return to Belgrade to occupy my place as member of the Upper House (the Senate) for a few weeks. I soon learned that the unpopularity of the King had greatly spread and deepened. Men and women of the best society complained of the Queen's haughtiness, and I was told that many officers spoke with undisguised hatred of the King. I conceived a plan which, in my opinion, would lessen his Majesty's unpopularity and even, may be, transform it into popularity.

In 1904 would be witnessed the centenary of the rising of the Serbian nation against the Turks and their election of Karageorge as leader. It was natural and proper that the people should celebrate that grand event. I formed the idea that King Alexander Obrenovich should take the initiative in the national commemoration. I prepared a memorandum for him showing why he ought to head the movement, and also drafted the letter in which he was to invite the Government to introduce a Bill decreeing the erection of a joint monument to Karageorge and Milosh Obrenovich and to their co-workers in the liberation of the country. My suggestion was to be considered a State secret and, excepting the King and Queen, only my two intimate friends, Lubomir Kalyevich (President of the Senate) and the Senator General Franassovich, knew anything about it. When I presented my memorandum and explained it to the King he said that he liked the idea, but that he wished to consider my suggestion. But I had to leave Belgrade

for England before he arrived at any decision on the subject.

I will not write here of the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga. Not that I am afraid of hurting the feelings of men who are still powerful and who, having murdered their King, to whom they were bound by oath to be loyal, and the Queen, who was a helpless woman, would not hesitate to murder a poor old fellow who dared describe and publish their crime. I did not hesitate to write a book on that tragedy, nor did I ever hesitate to declare that the assassination added a black and bloody page to Serbia's history—quite unnecessarily, too, since matters might have been righted in a far less ruthless manner.

In my opinion the officers of any nation ought to be, by their very profession, the most chivalrous men of that nation. That some Serbian officers could commit such a crime and aggravate its horror by murdering a woman filled me with such loathing and shame that I could not remain the official representative of Serbia in London any longer, and at once resigned my position as Serbian Minister to the Court of St. James's. It is only just that I should add that many of the assassins of King Alexander and Queen Draga honestly believed they were doing a patriotic deed, and several of them fought bravely and rendered their country important services during our incessant wars since the autumn of 1912.

I do not write all I know about the assassination, because the tragedy belongs rather to the history of Serbia and has nothing to do with my Memoirs save in a very indirect, remote, strange and extraordinary manner, as I will now relate.

On March 12th, 1903, my friend William T. Stead invited me to a reception on the 16th at Mowbray House, in the office of the *Review of Reviews*, to meet an extraordinary clairvoyante whom he had discovered. He wrote: "I wish most particularly that you should come because my clairvoyante is an Englishwoman and, as such, could easily enter into our way of thinking, whereas you are a foreigner whose mental processes may be different from hers. Could you not bring with you something connected with King Milan or Queen Nathalie?"

I cut off the signature of King Alexander from a letter in my possession, placed it in an envelope which I gummed up, and took it with me to Mr. Stead's reception. I was elected one of the members of the committee, which had to note the clairvoyante's statements and watch the proceedings.

We were surrounding the clairvoyante, or, to be more precise, the psychometrist, Mrs. Julia Burchell, of Bradford. The rooms were filled with ladies and gentlemen. The first experiments in psychometry were all wrong. Mrs. Burchell evidently worked with great effort and some difficulty. At last she exclaimed: "Mr. Stead, you have packed this room with too many people. The magnetic currents issuing from them are cutting me in all directions, and I cannot see anything clearly. Give me another room and admit only twelve or fifteen persons at once and I shall be able to exercise my powers!"

Mr. Stead then proposed to give a dinner that evening in the neighbouring Hotel Norfolk, and invited, I think, about fifteen guests. I could not accept his invitation, as that very evening had been fixed for a Court reception at Buckingham Palace, which I had

promised to attend. I therefore left the sealed envelope with King Alexander's signature in the keeping of Mr. Eugen Lazarovich, with the request that he should place it in the hands of Mrs. Burchell when she began her psychometric experiments, and that he should come next morning to tell me what she said. I did not tell him what was in the envelope, but authorised him to open it at the end of Mrs. Burchell's statements, and show the contents to her and to all present.

Mr. Lazarovich came early next morning, and very excitedly spoke to me somewhat as follows:

"What a pity you could not have been with us last evening. We had a very dramatic and quite an extraordinary scene with Mrs. Burchell. When I placed your envelope in her hands she immediately said: 'Inside is the signature of a young man; it is the signature of a young King, but I cannot read his name, as it is written in characters which I have never seen before.' She proceeded to describe the young King, and I recognised at once that she was describing King Alexander. Then she said she saw a lady near him, somewhat older than he was, and she supposed she must be his wife, and she described Queen Draga quite correctly. She next proceeded to describe the Old Palace in Belgrade and stopped all of a sudden, gazed for some moments silently into space, and exclaimed, 'But what is this? I see soldiers surrounding the Palace; I see officers breaking the closed doors by a dynamite cartridge; many of them rush into the Palace; all the rooms are dark; the officers, with revolvers in their hands, rush about in a great rage through the dark rooms, looking for the King and Queen, to murder them. I see now someone bringing two lighted candles, and with them they make

a fresh search. Oh, they find them!' screamed Mrs. Burchell, and fell on her knees, raised both her arms and prayed to God to save them, and nearly swooned, saying they had murdered them. Some ladies and two or three gentlemen rushed to her, raised her and begged her to quiet herself, as she was in a state of great agitation and weeping. We were all deeply moved, and did not care any more for further psychometric experiments after her graphic description of the assassination of Queen Draga and King Alexander."

Mrs. Burchell's vision of the assassination took place on Friday, March 16th, 1903, in the Hotel Norfolk, Norfolk Street, Strand, London, after the dinner which Mr. Stead gave to a number of ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Lazarovich gave me his report, as I said, next morning, March 17th. I knew Mr. Stead was never in his office on a Saturday, so I went to him on Monday, the 19th. He confirmed all the details of Mrs. Burchell's vision, of which Mr. Lazarovich had already acquainted me. He handed me a letter he had just received from Mrs. Bailey, one of the ladies who helped to lift Mrs. Burchell when she nearly swooned from the shock. Mrs. Bailey, a clairvoyante herself and well-known in London, wrote to Stead that she had seen all the visions of Mrs. Burchell, which were correctly described by her (Mrs. Burchell), that she (Mrs. Bailey) saw the officers wearing lambskin kalpaks, or turbans, as if they were Russian officers, and that she heard two names pronounced—"Alexander" and "Peter." The leading murderer she described as dark-featured and very like a gipsy.

I was, of course, tremendously impressed by what I had heard and, after some hesitation, decided to write to King Alexander. I did not describe Mrs. Burchell's

vision in all its details. I wrote only imploring him to take the greatest care of his life, not only when he drove out to church, theatre, park or other public place, and in the streets, but also when he was at home, as I had reason to believe that an attempt would be made to murder him in his own Palace. I expected he would at once wire summoning me to Belgrade, to explain why I wrote that warning. I did not receive any message whatever, but several years later I learned that King Alexander wrote to me, called an equerry and gave him the letter with an order to take it to the Foreign Office and have it sent to me at once. The equerry, being one of the conspirators, took that letter to Colonel Mashin, the head of the conspiracy, who destroyed it.

In the early hours of June 11th—May 29th according to the old calendar, the anniversary (all but a day) of the assassination of Prince Michael in 1868—the soldiers, led by Colonel Mashin, surrounded the Old Palace, forced the door by a dynamite cartridge, which at the same time destroyed the electrical connections, rushed into the dark rooms, searched for the King and Queen (who had hid themselves in an alcove in a wall), sent for some candles—two, as seen by Mrs. Burchell —with which they made a fresh search of all the rooms, found the King and Queen and brutally murdered them.

As early as seven o'clock in the morning a reporter from the *Daily Telegraph* came to the Legation to ask what truth there was in a wire from Cologne that King Alexandra and Queen Draga had been assassinated. I had then no news from Belgrade, but an hour later I received an official telegram, signed by the new

Foreign Minister, L. Kalyevich, that the King and Queen had perished in a mutual struggle (*sic!*), and a new Government had been formed. I showed the official telegram to the reporters, who had come in a crowd, telling them that, curiously enough, the assassination of the King and Queen had been seen in London by a clairvoyante on March 16th, nearly three months before it actually took place. I advised them to see Mr. Stead, who could supply all the details of that vision. Mr. Stead published in the next issue of the *Review of Reviews* a full account of what had happened at the *séance*, his statement being confirmed by the signatures of almost all who had witnessed that memorable scene.

When I went to Belgrade in 1914 I found it was common knowledge that the conspirators had opened the safe in the bedroom of the King and Queen and discovered in it my letter warning the King.

There is another story associated with the name of King Alexander which is even more extraordinary than that which I have just related.

In 1899, when I was leaving London for The Hague to act as Serbia's first delegate to the Peace Conference, I received a strange letter. It was addressed to me simply as "Chedo Mijatovich, Senator, Belgrade," evidently by somebody who did not know that I was in London, serving as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James's. The letter was written in Carlovitz, a town in Southern Hungary, well-known for wine and dear to Serbs as the seat of the Patriarch. The letter ran somewhat in this way (I have not the original at hand):

"We three undersigned are spiritualists. I, the first undersigned, am a medium. We heard the story that the body of the Tsar of the Huns was buried somewhere in this country. We had the ambition to discover the grave of Attila. By the instructions of a spirit, given to us at a *séance*, we went to a small hillock in the neighbourhood of Zemun [Semlin]. We dug there and discovered a stone sarcophagus, and in it was the skeleton of a man with a sword and gold ornaments. When we had carried all we found to the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, we were told that that was not the grave of Attila, but of one of the voyvodes [generals or leaders of the army]. Disappointed as we were, on our return to Carlovitz we held a *séance* to ask an explanation of the spirit who had misled us. But another spirit spoke, upbraiding us: 'What a shame, you are Serbs and you search for Attila's grave! What is Attila to you? Why do you not search for something of greater interest to your people?'

"We then asked him: 'Who art thou?'

"And he answered: 'I am the spirit of your Tsar Dushan.'

"And we then spoke to him: 'Oh, our dear Tsar Dushan, we are so pleased that thou shouldst speak to us. Of course, we would prefer to find something more interesting to our people. Do thy crown and sceptre still exist?'

"'Yes,' he answered; 'all my regalia, with many precious stones and gold, are buried in Serbia.'

"'Could you instruct us how to find that treasure?'

"'Yes,' he said; 'you can find it and dig it out, but only by the help of Chedo Mijatovich.'

"And now, sir, you will understand why we address

ourselves to you. We wish to meet you in order to arrange how to proceed in our task of discovering the crown and the royal treasure of Tsar Dushan. Shall we come to see you in Belgrade, or will you prefer to come to us in Carlovitz?"

Their letter was sent to Belgrade, but the postal authorities knew where I was and re-addressed it to London. I answered that, being officially occupied in London, I could not arrange a personal meeting. But being willing to assist them as much as I could, I would write to the Government of Serbia for the necessary permission to search for Tsar Dushan's treasure, and in that way I should be indirectly helping them.

I may here take the opportunity of mentioning an interesting but little known fact. Serbia was, in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, one of the few gold- and silver-producing countries of Europe. Her aristocracy, possessing large estates, became, in those centuries, very rich. When the Turkish invasion took place, and the Serbian noblesse fled to save their lives from the conqueror's sword, they could not carry away the gold and silver which had been through generations accumulating in their castles. Hoping they would return again, they hid their treasures or buried them in their castles or in the neighbourhood. Circumstances did not allow them to return, but ere they died they communicated, in writing or orally, the secret of their buried treasures to their heirs. The consequence was that after Serbia became autonomous almost every year people arrived in Belgrade from all parts of the world for permits to search for the treasures of their ancestors. I remember that, in the course of only one year, I gave, as Minister of Finance, fifty such permis-

sions. The Serbs have a special word to designate these treasures. They do not call them generally "the treasure" (*blago*), but *ostave*, which means "something that has been left."

Now I return to my Carlovitz correspondents.

Two or three weeks later I received their second letter. They reported that after they got my answer they held a *séance* to communicate it to the spirit of Tsar Dushan. The Tsar said: "Oh, yes, I know it. The fact is, Mijatovich has his doubts about what you wrote to him. Well, write and tell him there are many good mediums where he is living. Let him go to the nearest and ask his controlling spirit to call me, and I will myself tell Mijatovich all that is necessary concerning my regalia and treasure." And they urged me to do as the spirit of Tsar Dushan advised.

I dropped that correspondence. Their second letter found me at the first International Peace Conference at The Hague. On my return to London I had to prepare to leave for Constantinople, and when I had been again reappointed as Serbian Minister to London in 1902 I—then sharing the general prejudice against occult things—did not like that a Minister to the Court of St. James's should be seen visiting a medium.

But after my resignation, in consequence of the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga, I was living in London as a private person, occupied occasionally with journalism, and there was no longer any reason why I should not see a medium. Early in 1904 my wife read in some paper that a certain Mr. Vango could call spirits and put them in touch with living persons. She suggested that I should ascertain whether he could induce the spirit of Tsar Dushan to tell me

whether the Serb imperial regalia were still in existence, and, if so, where they could be found. So I went to see Mr. Vango.

I did not make an appointment by letter, but went on the chance of finding him at home. We saw each other then for the first time. He did not ask me who I was or my profession. In fact, before he could say a word, I inquired whether he could summon spirits to talk with us. Mr. Vango answered modestly that sometimes he succeeded and sometimes failed.

"Must I tell you the name and position of the man with whose spirit I wish to speak?"

"Oh, no," replied Mr. Vango; "all that you have to do is to concentrate your whole thoughts on the man. By the way, did he speak English while he was alive?"

On my answering in the negative, he went on: "Well, that will make it somewhat more difficult. But it does not matter; we will try. Recently an Indian called and wished to speak with the spirit of his partner who had died suddenly in India, leaving the business in great confusion. When I awoke from my trance he thanked me very warmly, saying that his partner's spirit, speaking to him in his native language, had made everything perfectly clear."

Mr. Vango took a seat in an arm-chair, and presently went into a trance and said: "Here is the spirit of a young man who wishes urgently to speak to you."

"But the man with whose spirit I wish to speak was not young when he died," I said.

"Oh, I know that," the medium rejoined; "you wish to speak with a King who lived in the middle of the fourteenth century. His spirit is here, too, but that

young man pushed him back, intimating that he had something urgent to say to you."

"Who can he be, and what is it he wishes to tell me?"

"I cannot tell you," said Mr. Vango, "because he is talking in a language which I have never heard before."

I was now still more puzzled, and asked the medium whether he could reproduce at least one word by which I might perhaps identify the language the young man used.

"I will try," the medium answered. His arm-chair was already near the wall, but he pushed it a few inches backwards, still nearer, and, bending his head closer to it, listened for a few moments. And then, to my utter astonishment, he began in a peculiar fashion to reproduce, word by word, an entire sentence in the Serbian tongue.

"*Molim pishite moyoy materi Nataliyi da mi oprosti.*"

"Please write to my mother Nathalie to forgive me."

As I have mentioned, he reproduced those words in a peculiar fashion, which was that he read the syllables backwards.

"Lim-Mo—Molim, te-shi-pi—pishite, yoy-mo—moyoy," etc.

I recognised that it was the spirit of King Alexander, who referred evidently to the occasion, on which I, taking leave of him in November, 1900, told him he had behaved cruelly to his mother, and should mend his conduct to his parents. Not to leave any doubt about his identity, he said: "I repent that I did not follow your advice about that monument, but the Queen was

against it." This related to my proposal that he should take the initiative in inviting the nation to erect a worthy monument to Karageorge, Milosh, and their co-workers in the liberation of Serbia from the Turks.

I consider that incident as the most remarkable in my life. More than any other experience it convinced me that there is a life after death, that there is a spirit world, and that the spirits sometimes desire and find means to communicate with us.

I think I ought to say that the reproduction of the Serbian words of King Alexander was made with great effort on the part of the medium. Mr. Vango became yellow in the face and drops of perspiration appeared on his forehead. I was afraid that something would happen to him and begged him to stop. The spirit of Tsar Dushan spoke to me through the controlling spirit of the medium, and the latter reported to me in English what Dushan's spirit wished to communicate. He repeated that his regalia, as well as treasure, existed in a large iron box, hidden behind a wall of red Roman bricks, in the cave of a vineyard, situated at a certain spot near the road leading from Negotin to Zayechar (two towns in Eastern Serbia, near the Bulgarian frontier). He gave me instructions how to discover the spot, but they were so very vague that I did not think I could act on them.

CHAPTER XIII

Queen Draga

I SAW Queen Draga for the first time as the bride of Svetozar Mashin, the Secretary for the Mining Department, when I was Serbian Minister of Finance in 1880. She was then a very pretty girl of eighteen or nineteen, with magnificent dark brown velvety eyes, delicately cut features, and a fine, slim figure.

Her husband and his elder brother Alexander (afterwards Colonel) Mashin were the sons of Dr. Mashin, a Czech by nationality, an able physician and highly cultured man enjoying much respect but very little sympathy and friendship. She was the daughter of Panta Lunyevitsa, Prefect of Shabats, the grandson of Panta Lunyevitsa, a wealthy exporter of pigs to the Hungarian markets at the time of the second rising of the Serbs under Milosh Obrenovich against the Turks in 1815. He did not take part in the movement, and was allowed to follow his trade; but he assisted the cause by giving or lending large sums of money whenever Milosh wanted to buy arms and ammunition from Austria. He was, indeed, so helpful that Milosh took him for his *pobratim* (brother by solemn adoption).

In all European countries you can legally adopt a child, but among the Serbs, and according to their customs and laws, it is possible to adopt a woman as one's sister (*pesestrima*) or a man as a brother (*pobratim*). In olden times it was usual to consecrate adoption by a

special church service and prayers; in our days it is done by certain legal proceedings at a court of justice or by a declaration on the part of both parties that they will henceforth consider each other as *pobratimi*. Milosh Obrenovich and Panta Lunyevitsa became *pobratimi* in that simple fashion. King Alexander, in engaging himself to marry the great-granddaughter of Lunyevitsa, made much of the latter's having been *pobratim* to the founder of the Obrenovich dynasty. That was legitimate, but it was not legitimate to represent Lunyevitsa as one of the voyvodes of the Serb nation, which he never was.

The wealth of the first Lunyevitsa was spent or lost in the first half of the nineteenth century, and his grandson, the Prefect of Shabats, lived on his salary, which was not large. Anyhow, he placed his daughter Draga in Madame Zermann's school for young ladies, the best in Belgrade. Practically it was the school for the daughters of middle-class folk. Here Miss Draga Lunyevitsa learned to speak German.

When, a few years after the marriage, Svetozar Mashin died, his pretty widow found herself with only a small pension (I think about £4 a month), and had to work to keep herself respectably. She began to write stories for some papers in Belgrade and offered to give lessons in German.

Fortunately Queen Nathalie, always alert in good work, heard of the difficulties of the great-granddaughter of Prince Milosh's *pobratim* Lunyevitsa. Draga's youth, beauty and intelligence, and, I am sure, her brave struggle against all sorts of temptation, appealed to the Queen, who engaged a French lady to teach Draga French as well as the manners and customs of good society in France. Draga made remarkable

progress, and the Queen, leaving Serbia in 1888 to live in France, took her as one of her Court ladies to Biarritz.

Men and women of the best French and Spanish society used constantly to visit Queen Nathalie, and Madame Mashin rapidly completed her own education and won everybody's admiration by her beauty and elegance as well as her *esprit*. Probably the years from 1888 to 1896 were the happiest of her life. King Alexander used to spend a few weeks every year with his mother at her villa Sashino in Biarritz, and could not resist the magnetic influence of the pretty widow. It has often been asserted that Queen Nathalie intentionally encouraged the flirtation in order to strengthen her own influence with him against that of his father. I do not believe that, because it does not harmonise with her character as I know it. She hated Milan, but was far above low intrigue.

One of the defects of King Alexander's personality was his utter want of affection for anybody and everything. King Milan said to me once, after one of the periodical visits his son paid him in Paris, that his son's coldness of heart and imperviousness to the charms of women made him almost despair of his future. Queen Nathalie probably was amused and interested to see the ice around her son's heart thawing under the soft fire of the eyes of her dame de la cour. She thought the flirtation between King Alexander and Draga would only be a case of platonic love, and nobody was more shocked than she to discover the real nature of the attachment into which that flirtation had developed.

On King Alexander's return from Biarritz to Paris in August, 1897, I went to Paris to pay him my respects.

He and King Milan kept me for two weeks as their guest. A few days after his arrival King Alexander asked me to accompany him on his morning stroll through the streets. In the Rue de la Paix he entered a jeweller's shop, selected a most beautiful gold cigarette-case, and ordered that the Serb word "Draga" should be placed in diamonds in the left-hand corner of it. (The word *draga* means, in Serbian, "the dear one," but is also used as a Christian name, equivalent to the names of Caroline or Charlotte in Latin.) The price was between two and three thousand francs. He had not notes enough to complete the amount, and asked me for three hundred francs. I happened to have as much and gave it to him. When we left the jeweller's I said to him: "Your 'dear one' will be henceforth dear to me too, as she gave me the unique opportunity of lending money to my King."

"What a bold and impertinent fellow you are! But I shall never let my 'dear one' be dear to anyone else. Look now, as you are my friend I will tell you that at last I have found the woman who has entirely won my heart and who is worthy to be my 'dear one.' I tell you this in the strictest confidence, and you must not make the slightest allusion to it in my father's presence, nor must you tell anybody about that gold cigarette-case."

I saw, then, that the gossip which had reached me in London about his flirtation with Madame Draga Mashin, about their bathing together, and on one occasion being nearly drowned, had a real foundation. But I could not think, not for a moment, that King Alexander would marry Madame Mashin and make her Queen of Serbia. The French have a proverb which says: "*C'est l'imprévu qui arrive le plus souvent!*"

What no politician could ever have anticipated—this marriage—took place to the astonishment of all the world. I was not only astounded, but felt that it would lead to the ruin of the Obrenovich dynasty. Nor did I conceal my fears. So I was not hurt when King Alexander informed me that he could not retain me any longer as his representative at such an important post as Constantinople.

When, on my journey from Constantinople to Abbazia (I must be allowed to relate this interview at some detail, although I have already incidentally referred to it), I arrived at Belgrade, in November, 1900, King Alexander introduced me to Queen Draga as a devoted friend of his "house," and left us alone, and I had a long talk with her.

She expressed her regret that I was one of those who disapproved of the King's marriage.

"Whatever we may think of it," I said, "we cannot change a *fait accompli*. You are to-day our Queen, and, as such, have every right to our respect, loyalty and service. I, who believe that all the happenings of this life are predestined, have no doubt your marriage with the King was a providential act. I cannot tell what is the aim of Providence. It may be, and let us hope it is, the good of Serbia and the Royal dynasty; but it may be the misfortune of our country and dynasty. It is the duty of us all, and more especially your own duty, madame, so to work as to prove that the King's marriage was meant to ensure the happiness of our country and the glory of the dynasty."

"I am conscious of the honour Providence has bestowed on me in making me Queen of Serbia. I am conscious of my responsibility and of my duty to the

King who has made me his wife, overcoming all difficulties so splendidly. I am conscious of my duty to the country, and I am anxious to do it. I pray to God to enable me to perform all my duties properly and thoroughly in order that all Serbs—and you also, Mr. Mijatovich—may one day honestly say that, after all, the King did well in marrying me."

She spoke with emphasis, warmly and eloquently. All she said gave me the impression of absolute sincerity. I looked straight into her eyes and face and thought her really beautiful.

"I pray," Queen Draga continued, "I pray all good Serbs to help me to be a good Queen. I ask you, an old and devoted friend of the dynasty, to help me with your advice and suggestions to win the people's love."

"I think, madame, you can easily do that if you succeed in correcting some defects in the King's character."

She stared at me in frank bewilderment. "What!" she exclaimed. "Defects in the King's character! To me the King's character has no defects, no weak points. Please indicate what you consider his defects."

"Well, madame, the King is hasty, impulsive, self-willed, vindictive, lacking in charity and kindness of heart. Give him what he has not, and try by your influence, to make him just and kind to everybody, a generous man, a true King."

"You forget," she said, "that a real King ought to punish too, as well as to forgive."

In my turn I stared at her in astonishment. The beauty of her eyes and face had vanished, and I thought I beheld the revelation of a narrow mind sympathising with the cruel propensities of King Alexander's. After a few moments' silence I said: "Oh, madame, I am sorry

to hear you speak of punishment. Punishment is the duty of the law and the law courts; and one of the most beautiful prerogatives of the King is to have mercy and to consider punishment in the light of human nature and, by his generosity, prevent *summum jus* from becoming *summa injuria*. But, with your permission, I would like to leave this subject and ask your Majesty a personal question. You, no doubt, know that I take a great interest in all sorts of occult phenomena. Has your marriage with the King not been foretold or foreshadowed in some way?"

"Oh, yes!" the Queen said eagerly. "I can give you a small contribution to your theories, which are, of course, well known to me. As a young widow, standing alone and without anyone to protect me, I was sometimes subjected to the gossip and slander of jealous or wicked women. One day I heard what lies a certain woman was spreading about me. It pained me so much that I cried bitterly, and at last fell on my knees and prayed to God to send me a husband who would protect me. When I went to bed that night I prayed again that, if it was His will that I should marry again, He would let me see in my dreams the man who should be my second husband. That night I dreamt I was standing in a garden and looking up towards the blue sky, when suddenly I noticed something slowly descending from the clouds. I wondered what it was until I discovered it was the portrait of a man in a golden frame. Presently, floating in the air, it came straight before my face, and I recognised the portrait of King Alexander; so lifelike was it that I thought he was smiling at me. I awoke with a shock and said to myself: 'Surely this dream was not sent in answer to my prayer?

King Alexander cannot possibly be my second husband.' And yet the King has married me."

The Queen did not tell me when she had that dream. But I dare say it was at the beginning of the Royal romance which ended in a Royal tragedy. Madame Draga Mashin became the sweetheart of King Alexander in 1896. But some time before that year Queen Nathalie came one morning to Paris, accompanied by Madame Mashin and Miss Zana Gyorgyevich. The Queen took both young ladies with her to Madame de Thebes, the famous clairvoyante, who told Madame Mashin that she cherished very high ambitions, that she would see the desire of her heart fulfilled, but that very fulfilment would lead to a catastrophe in which both she and her husband should perish. Miss Gyorgyevich communicated to a friend of mine, some time in 1902, what Madame de Thebes had told Madame Draga Mashin, that is, before the assassination on June 11th, 1903. In April, 1914, I saw Miss Gyorgyevich in Belgrade, and she told me that Queen Draga was so annoyed about that story being told to anyone that police proceedings had been started against her, and only abandoned when Miss Gyorgyevich promised that she would never again mention the incident.

CHAPTER XIV

Mackenzie of Gairloch and Others

I HAVE had many acquaintances among the politicians of Serbia and its neighbours, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Rumania and Turkey. And without boasting I may say that I have made some interesting acquaintances and a few good and faithful friends in Great Britain also.

But I had more friends in the non-political sphere, and among them none was more interesting than Frank Mackenzie, the younger brother of the late Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, of Gairloch, in Ross-shire. From 1876 to 1895 he lived and worked in Belgrade, highly respected by everyone. As a mark of the regard in which he was held the municipality named a street after him (Mackenzeeyéva Ulitza).

He was the kindest, most pious, most upright and most charitable of men. Sometimes he showed a bent towards eccentricity, a tendency which, on a few occasions, made me somewhat ridiculous in the eyes of officialdom in Belgrade. But, on the whole, his character and personality impressed the Serbians deeply and favourably, and, without exaggeration, Frank Mackenzie won the respect and sympathy of the Serbians not for himself only, but for the Scots and British people as well. Though he eschewed politics, his principles and sympathies were decidedly Radical.

He came to Serbia in the summer of 1876, during

our first war with Turkey, with the object of tending the wounded Serbians and assisting the suffering women and children. He went to our Eastern army, which defended our Timok front, and stayed and worked for some time in the town of Zayechar. But not being physically strong, through overwork he caught a chill which developed into pneumonia, and he would have died but for the cleverness of the Serbian military doctors and the assiduous nursing of a Serbian officer, Colonel M. In after years Mackenzie always spoke with deepest gratitude of the Colonel's kindness, though at the same time with great sadness, because this good man and splendid soldier had confessed to him that he did not believe in life after death nor in the existence of a personal God. As Frank Mackenzie spoke French fluently, he had tried in vain to convert the unbelieving Colonel. But whenever he spoke of him he always acknowledged that, although he (the Colonel) did not believe in Jesus Christ as the Saviour, his conduct was that of a perfect Christian and, therefore, of a true gentleman.

Mr. Mackenzie spent thousands of pounds in supporting the widows and orphans of fallen Serbian soldiers, and some of his experiences were singular, to put it mildly. With the permission of the Serbian Government he went to Ujitsa (the principal town in South-Western Serbia) and tried to induce hundreds of Montenegrins to make a road, paying them good wages. They worked for two or three weeks, but one day they all came together to Mr. Mackenzie and declared that they refused to work any more because they had heard that the "English Queen Victoria" had sent, through him, thousands of pounds to be freely distributed

amongst them without exacting any labour in return. They insisted that he should at once disgorge Queen Victoria's gold sovereigns, and the police had to come in to protect him from their violence. He had to abandon road-making by charity and return to Belgrade. In acknowledging his manifest charities King Milan, at the instance of the Serbian Red Cross, sent him the Cross of Knight Commander of the Takovo Order. He accepted the decoration, but never wore it, nor did he ever go to the Palace to thank the King for it.

Belgrade is built on a triangle, of which the western side is washed by the river Save, the eastern by the Danube, which, coming from the north, receives the waters of the Save at the foot of the citadel, which forms the northern top of the triangle. At the citadel the principal street (Prince Michael's and Terazia) begins, running straight southwards for about five miles to the base of the triangle. This chief street, at the time of Mr. Mackenzie's arrival, ended in a field of some 300 acres which belonged to one of the most distinguished men of Serbia, Mr. George Simich, who let it to a farmer at a very low rent. Mackenzie bought the land for (if I remember rightly) three thousand pounds, divided it up into building lots, and rapidly developed a new quarter of Belgrade, which the people themselves called "the English Quarter" (Englezovats). He let the lots on very favourable conditions and became the benefactor of the poor and middle classes. Mr. Mackenzie built a few houses for himself there, a small chapel which he named Sala Mira ("the Hall of Peace"), and a temperance hotel, in which only tea, coffee and lemonade could be got, and to which, consequently, no one went. That

temperance hotel was at last bought by my wife for our own residence. Before we moved to the English Quarter we had a house in the immediate vicinity of the Palace, and, as my wife was an Englishwoman, our house was known as "English House," and most of the English visitors to Belgrade came to see us. And so also came Frank Mackenzie.

We rapidly grew very good friends. As he was a Plymouth Brother and my wife belonged to the Wesleyans, she invited him to come every Sunday to dine with us, and for many years (practically from 1878 till 1889) we spent every Sunday evening together, besides his being a frequent visitor during the week.

The first service which Mackenzie asked me to render him was to recommend a good, honest lawyer. I recommended Mr. Marco Stoyanovich, whom I invited to come to my house the next day at 4 P.M. to meet Mr. Mackenzie. My lawyer friend arrived at 4.15 in a cab. I noticed Mackenzie hesitated to retain Mr. Stoyanovich, for he told the lawyer he would communicate with him in a few days. When Mr. Stoyanovich left Mackenzie said, "I am sorry your friend does not impress me as a good lawyer. First of all, he did not keep his appointment punctually; secondly, he came in a cab; and thirdly, he wears patent leather boots! I don't think I will engage him." I thought these observations, pedantic as they were, very characteristic. However, after he had made further inquiries he engaged Mr. Marco, never repented the choice, and become one of his best friends.

Very soon afterwards he asked me to introduce him to a representative type of Serbian clergyman. Accordingly I invited my learned and distinguished friend,

Archimandrite Nikifor Duchich, who had also the advantage of speaking French, to tea with us and Mr. Mackenzie. At first my clerical friend, a tall, handsome, highly-cultured man, impressed my Scots friend favourably. But towards the end he made a most unexpected and terrible mess of all those good impressions. Mackenzie said he had found the Serbian peasantry very nice fellows, but he had noticed, with regret, they scarcely ever prayed. Then my typical ecclesiastic held forth.

"But that is true, and it is quite right. It shows how intelligent our peasants are. Why should they pray? Our people prayed for five hundred years to be delivered from their Turkish oppressors, and God never listened to them until they rose in arms against the Turks and drove them away from their country. Oh, no, sir, we do not want prayers. Give us good schools, good rifles, guns and ammunitions, and then God's blessing will be with us."

Thereupon my Scots friend and I, together with the Churchman, formed a curious "tableau vivant," in which astonishment had transformed Mackenzie and me into stone statues.

I remembered this scene on another occasion ten years later. In June, 1889, Serbia celebrated the fifth centenary of Kossovo. I was Master of the Ceremonies at that festival in Krushevats, the old capital of Tsar Lazar. After the conclusion of the festival I was returning with some London Press reporters from Krushevats to Belgrade, and *en route* stopped for a few hours at the beautiful monastery of Lubostin, built by Tsar Lazar's wife, Tsaritsa Militsa. When we entered the courtyard of the monastery I was told that the

bishops of Nish, Chachak and Shabats were there, drinking coffee on the veranda of the abbot's house. I at once begged permission to introduce the London journalists to the bishops, and we were taken to their most reverend presence, received cordially, and regaled with coffee, sweetmeats, cigars, and a nice talk (I acting as interpreter between the journalists and the bishops). Rising to leave, one of the London reporters was guilty of what I thought to be bad taste in asking, "What message do you wish to send to the British people through us?"

Nicanor, the Bishop of Nish, who had once been my teacher of religion, said, "Oh, yes, we have a message for the British people. Please tell them we do not want them to send us Bibles. Let them send us rifles and guns to fight the Turks and the Shvabas [Austrians]."

For a moment I hesitated to translate the message. But, after all, I did so, and the Serbian bishops and London journalists constituted a remarkable tableau.

I think it was Lord Radstock who first wrote to Mr. Mackenzie that the British friends of Serbia had heard with sorrow that there was something like religious persecution in the country. Other people wrote to him on the same subject, and Mackenzie showed me their letters and asked my assistance to find out what was the matter. I assured him that the Serbs were the most tolerant people in religious matters, and there was no religious persecution in Serbia. But upon further inquiries we discovered that some peasants of the district of Valyevo, belonging to the only religious sect in Serbia, the so-called "Nazarenes," had been condemned to hard labour for twenty years for having refused to bear arms as soldiers.

Mackenzie of Gairloch and Others

It appears that a Serb who had spent several years in the United States had returned about the middle of the nineteenth century to Southern Hungary, and there began to organise among the Serbs of Hungary the sect of the "Nazarenes." He appealed to the people to have nothing to do with the official Orthodox Church; said that they did not want any priests to stand between them and God; that they should not pray to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, but should endeavour to live according to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ; that they should read the Holy Word and pray to God constantly, according as the Holy Ghost moved them. The sect spread from Hungary to Serbia, and was especially strong in the district of Valyevo and along the river Save. The State authorities and the people acknowledged that the Nazarenes were exemplary Christians, kind, willing to oblige, honest, pure-hearted, modest, and obedient to the civil law in everything, except that they would not bear arms as soldiers. Their religious principles came into conflict in respect of military service, which was the lawful duty of every Serb. The tribunals inflicted the severest punishment on recalcitrant Nazarenes. Generally, the penalty was imprisonment with hard labour for twenty years, but, as the men were honest, meek and lowly, obedient, hard-working and fervently religious, they rapidly won the sympathy of the officials of the prison and were soon released and allowed to return home.

Two of them were ostensibly in the prison of the citadel, but really they acted as attendants at the prison offices, or were sent on different errands, or bought provisions for the prison. Mackenzie and I visited them in the fortress, met them often in the

streets of the town (always wearing convicts' dress), and at his request they obtained permission to join him at prayer in my drawing-room. It caused quite a sensation when it was rumoured that two Nazarene convicts came every Sunday to Minister Chedo's to pray with him. This not unnaturally led to my being suspected of being a Nazarene myself, although it was known that in the last war (in 1876 and 1877) I had served as major, and was the only Progressist that was decorated with the officer's Cross of Takovo for services rendered during the war. I cannot say whether King Milan was joking or was in earnest when, in later years, he said not only to me but to several other people that he would have entrusted the education of his son to me had he not had a suspicion that I was a Nazarene.

Later, the two Nazarene convicts took Mackenzie to the secret prayer-meetings of the Belgrade Nazarenes, and henceforth he went regularly to these meetings to pray. He was pleased when those simple but deeply religious men received him as if he had been one of themselves. I say "simple," because they were mostly small artisans and labourers. After a few months, one Sunday evening, my friend came to me deeply perturbed, pale, sad and almost in tears.

"What on earth is the matter?"

"A great blow has been dealt at me this evening," he answered. "I went, as usual, to the prayer-meeting of the Nazarenes, but was met at the door by their leader, who told me, 'Some of us had our doubts about the propriety of admitting you, who are not a Nazarene, to our meetings, and asked for enlightenment from our bishop in Hungary. We have received a sharp rebuke

for our foolish action, and an order not to admit you any more.'"

I sympathised with him the more sincerely as I know that two weeks earlier he had paid a distinguished Serbian lawyer a hundred and twenty pounds for a short but successful defence of a Nazarene who had refused to join the Army.

But this was not the only shock which his Nazarene friends gave Mackenzie. One day he came again to me, pulling a long face. He was such a sincere and natural man that he could not prevent his emotions from affecting the expression of his eyes and face.

Mackenzie, who, as a truly charitable man, used to visit the poor in Belgrade, had made the acquaintance of a labourer, a Nazarene, who had two beautiful daughters, of whom the elder was a prostitute and the younger was at home, dying slowly of consumption. Mackenzie tried first to reclaim the elder girl, but she laughed him to scorn.

"Don't speak to me of God and His mercy," she answered. "From my sixteenth to my twentieth year I resisted all temptations. I was a good girl, working with my needle, and praying morning and evening to God to help us not to starve. But either there is no God or He is a cruel God. I made my knees sore with kneeling in prayer, and all the answer I got to my tears and sighs was that both my father and my younger sister fell seriously ill. With my poor needle I could hardly earn a dinar [tenpence] a day. Terrified by the illness of my father and sister, and wishing to help them, I felt suddenly disgusted and, shutting my eyes, rushed to one of my most assiduous admirers and

sold myself. I got money enough to call in a doctor, and give my father and sister comforts and good food. My father recovered and is now at work; my sister is still ill, but I provide her doctor, her medicines, nurse, food and every comfort she may desire, and I can afford. No, sir, neither can I nor will I return to my former starving and sad life."

Thereupon Mackenzie spoke to the girl's father: "Your elder daughter does not earn money in a way pleasing to God, nor in an honourable manner. Do not accept her money for your younger daughter's assistance. I will myself give your younger daughter a weekly allowance and even more than her unworthy sister used to supply her with."

The girl's father and his sick daughter accepted with gladness and gratitude Mr. Mackenzie's offer, and for a month or two my friend supported the dying girl generously. But one day when he came to visit the poor girl her Nazarene father stopped him at the threshold and told him that their elders, to whom he had confided Mackenzie's advice and support, had invoked their bishop's counsel. "They have received," he said, "the bishop's order, which is as follows," and he opened a leather bag, produced a paper and read: "'The ailing sister ought to accept help from her elder sister because, although a prostitute, she is still her sister; she ought not to accept the assistance of a man who is a stranger and not a Nazarene.'"

But neither their intolerance nor those sad experiences could deter Mackenzie from a keen interest in the Nazarenes. He was no Nazarene, although, even more than myself, he was suspected of being one. His little chapel—the Hall of Peace—was called by many

"the Nazarenes' Chapel." When we first spoke of the sect he disapproved of their belief that people ought not to bear arms even if the enemy were attacking their country. But some years later he more closely approached their views. I was confirmed in that opinion by the following incident.

In 1885 I was Serbian Minister in London, and in June and July of that year Mackenzie lived in the Legation as our guest. Serbia was then preparing for her unfortunate war with Bulgaria. One day at noon there arrived a telegram for Mackenzie, sent by the British Minister in Belgrade, Sir John Locock. The Minister informed him that the Serbian Government had requisitioned from his stables twelve of his horses, which had been taken to draw the guns to Nish. The Minister added that, according to the Treaties between Serbia and Great Britain, the Serbian Government had no right to requisition the goods of a British subject, and that he had not protested as yet only because he wished first to hear from him (Mr. Mackenzie).

Sir John Locock well knew the charitable and generous Scotsman and his warm love for Serbia and the Serbian people. After a few minutes' silence Mackenzie said to me, "I do not like the British Minister to protest just because of my horses. Yet it will be his duty to protest unless we can render such a course superfluous. I think I have found a way out. Of my own free will I will make a gift of those twelve horses to the Serbian Government on one condition, namely, that they shall be employed only in the service of the Red Cross and not to draw the guns."

On behalf of the Serbian Government I accepted his generous gift and its condition. But I thought the

proviso somewhat reminiscent of our friends the Nazarenes.

On that occasion Mackenzie proved himself a true Scotsman. He asked me to draft a telegram informing the British Minister in Belgrade of his decision about the horses. In a few moments I handed him my draft. After reading it carefully he said: "My dear Minister, the telegraphic charge to Belgrade is threepence halfpenny a word. Your telegram will cost something like ten shillings. Can ye not condense it?"

I sat down again and tried to shorten it. I thought I was very successful in reducing it to, I think, twenty-four words. But he was not yet satisfied, and began to write his own message. At that moment the butler announced that luncheon had been served. But my Scottish friend kept hammering his brain for a laconic dispatch for another ten minutes, when I burst out laughing.

Mr. Mackenzie looked at me in amazement and asked what was amusing me.

"I am laughing," I said, "because just now you presented the Serbian Government with a couple of hundred pounds, and now you cudgel your brains and let our luncheon get cold merely to squeeze a few pence out of this telegram."

"My dear friend, if I do not try to save a few pence whenever I can, do you think I would ever be in a position to give away a couple of hundred pounds?" And then *he* laughed heartily. And I had to acknowledge that his laugh had more justification than mine.

On one occasion Mr. Mackenzie told me the story of his conversion. He spent his early youth on a man-of-war and led a careless, merry, godless life. One day,

while on leave in London, he went to the Army and Navy Club. Going up the stairs he passed two old gentlemen who met in the middle of the staircase.

One asked the other, "Have you seen our friend John lately?"

"Yes, I saw him two days before he died," announced the other one.

"Is he dead? And how did he die?"

"Quite happy, for he was at last to meet our Lord Jesus Christ face to face."

Mr. Mackenzie thought it odd these two men should speak of Jesus Christ as if He were a living reality. And then he asked himself: "But, after all, what proof have I that He is not a living reality? Did that man not die happy believing that he was going to meet Him? Supposing that He is a living reality, am *I* doing right in ignoring Him?"

This question disturbed his peace of mind. It haunted him day and night. At last he went for enlightenment to Paris, where his intimate friend the Rev. Mr. Grattan Guinness and his charming and intellectual wife were engaged in missionary work. They succeeded in opening his eyes to the great truths of the existence of a personal God and of a Redeemer and Saviour in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just then his mother died, leaving him eighty thousand pounds. To prove the reality of his conversion, and the sincerity of his faith in Jesus Christ, Frank Mackenzie immediately gave fifty thousand pounds to several charities. On that occasion Dr. Barnardo's Homes received many thousand pounds from him. I believe it was then that he bought the long lease of some land in Bow, where he erected several buildings

and established a college for missionaries and gave it absolutely to his friend Grattan Guinness. Nor did he cease to do good all the days of his life.

Before Mr. Mackenzie's arrival in Belgrade my friend the Rev. Alexa Ilich and I often discussed the publication of a religious magazine, dealing particularly with the revival of faith amongst the Serbs. Up to that time there had been no paper or periodical of the kind in Serbia. My friend was ready to act as editor and I was willing to help him with articles, but we could not start for want of more material support. When Mr. Mackenzie arrived I spoke to him of our plans, and he at once offered to subscribe for thirty copies of the magazine for the first year—*pour encourager les autres.* That promise was certainly not very grand, but my friend Ilich, strong in his belief that such a periodical was necessary, and firm in his faith in God, ventured to start the *Christian Messenger,* of which he has been the editor and proprietor for nearly thirty years. In its second year he was able to do without Mr. Mackenzie's support. When I was living in London on my small pension in the years 1890 to 1894, Mr. Mackenzie asked me to translate into Serbian the "Commentaries on the Gospels," by Dr. David Brown, of the Free Church College, Aberdeen. This I did, and he published the two volumes at his own expense.

These two publications (the *Christian Messenger* and Dr. Brown's "Commentaries") were Mr. Mackenzie's principal efforts in support of the religious revival in Serbia. But he acted also in other ways, and I was always ready to support him, although occasionally, as I have hinted, I got myself into ridiculous positions.

I think it was in 1883 (just after I resigned my

post as Minister in Mr. Pirotyanatz's Cabinet) that Mackenzie asked me to do him a personal service. There was a famous Scottish preacher, Dr. Somerville, of Edinburgh, who travelled throughout the world preaching in English, but having his sermon, sentence by sentence, immediately translated into the language of his audience. Dr. Somerville was then preaching to Magyar audiences in Budapest, and Mackenzie wished very much to bring him to Belgrade to deliver one or two sermons, if I would undertake to be the interpreter. I consented at once. Mr. Mackenzie was delighted; he wired to Dr. Somerville to come, engaged the large hall of a popular restaurant (Hayduk Velko), and placarded the walls with announcements that a famous Scots divine would preach a sermon which the late Minister of Finance and Foreign Affairs would translate sentence by sentence into Serbian. The *élite* of Belgrade Society came, and I was surprised at the presence of many officers.

My unbelieving chum, Dr. Vladan Georgevich, brought a few friends, mostly atheists like himself, and whenever, from my position on the right of Dr. Somerville, I glanced towards his group, they would begin to cross themselves in astonishment at my "queer job." But everything went well, and Dr. Somerville's sermon produced a great impression, and almost every man and woman in the audience came to thank the preacher and shake hands with him. I was sincerely glad to have had an opportunity of doing a service to a good cause, and to this day I consider it an honour to have on two occasions been Dr. Somerville's interpreter. His second sermon was delivered in the drawing-room of my wife's house before a select company. A few days later King Milan called me to the Palace and rebuked me for sacri-

ficing the "dignity" of a former Cabinet Minister merely to gratify my "evangelical" friends. He told me of the account Dr. Vladan Georgevich had given him of the "ridiculous" proceedings at the restaurant of Hayduk Velko. Of course, the report was an amusing caricature.

But sometimes, to humour my Scots friend, I did play a ridiculous rôle and had a good laugh at myself. He took it into his head once to establish a school for gipsies' children. He took a house and engaged a young Serbian lady as teacher. Then, accompanied by Mackenzie, I went to the gipsies' colony in Belgrade, from family to family, trying to persuade them to send their children to Mr. Mackenzie's special school for them. But they laughed at us and refused. Almost all of them, however, asked Mr. Mackenzie to give them money to educate their children in their own way, which my friend refused to do.

Nor did we fare better when Mackenzie wished to establish a school for blind boys and girls, of whom a great number appeared every Saturday in the churchyard of Belgrade. In Serbia the families of recently deceased persons, for six weeks after their death, go every Saturday to visit their graves and distribute food and money to the beggars for the benefit of the souls of the departed. The consequence is that on a Saturday you are sure to find many mendicants, mostly blind or lame, in the churchyards. With the aid of the inspector of the churchyard I gathered the blind boys and girls and spoke to them of the kind intentions of our friend. Some of them said, "We do not want to learn any trade. If it was God's will that we should earn our livelihood by other means than begging, He would not have

taken our sight from us." Most of them became angry and violent because they thought we had come to deprive them of their "begging profession," and threatened to attack us with their long thick staffs if we did not leave them in peace.

But we were somewhat more successful with Mackenzie's free dinners to the beggars. During our war with Turkey in 1876 all the beggars from the towns in Southern Serbia rushed to Belgrade as the safest place. One day, early in the summer of 1877, Mackenzie said to me: "I see crowds of beggars in Belgrade. I should like to give them every Sunday a free dinner, provided you would read to them some chapters from the Bible while they were eating." I laughed at the strange idea at first, but afterwards noticing how dear it was to my friend, I consented. I gave my promise partly because I thought that nothing would come of the scheme.

I thought it advisable to obtain permission from the prefect of the Belgrade police for those Sunday banquets, and also to request him to issue orders to the policemen to tell the beggars that they were invited by Mr. Mackenzie to a free Sunday dinner. The prefect, M. Zivoin Blaznavatz, a quiet, earnest and dignified man, could not help smiling when he heard our request, but he thought the suggestion so novel that he dared not employ policemen to convey Mr. Mackenzie's kind invitation to the beggars without a special order from the Home Minister. Consequently we called upon M. Tuzakovich. I was a good friend of his, although we belonged to different political parties. He did not laugh, but raised his eyebrows, shut one eye, twitched his lips, and made all sorts of "faces" at me, as though saying, without words, what great fools we both were. After

apparently considering the matter for some time, he at last said: "As you, Mr. Mijatovich, now belong to his Highness's Opposition, I would gladly prove the courtesy of his Highness's Government to you. I am afraid, however, that the beggars may disregard the invitations passed to them through the police because the latter are not exactly popular with them. But I will give orders to the prefect as you request, provided the Minister of Public Education and Church Affairs does not object to your reading the Bible at the dinner."

We went next to Mr. Alympiyé Vassilyevich, a delightful man, of fine manners, a philosopher, a Liberal, and a zealous Russophile and Panslavist. We had always been good friends, although my own political friends, the Progressists, were constantly attacking him, probably because he was one of the ablest men in the Liberal party. That he was an able man he proved at once, as the mere sight of a Scotsman enabled him to develop the matter of the reading of the Bible at a beggars' dinner into the question of the Union of the Anglican and Orthodox Churches. He spoke to us of the deep sympathy with which the Holy Synod of Russia contemplated that question. After an academic discourse of half an hour I ventured to remind the Minister of the object of our visit.

"Strictly speaking," said Mr. Vassilyevich, "as you are not in Holy Orders you ought not to read the Bible at public meetings. But as you are my friend, and this Englishman here is our country's friend, I will waive every objection and will let the Home Minister know this."

We had overcome Red Tape, but were met by a still more formidable difficulty—the prejudice of the hotel-

keepers and restaurateurs. None of them would let us have a room for our dinner. Many thought we were playing a practical joke. In vain Mr. Mackenzie offered to pay double what they usually charged for the dinners and dances of a wedding party. Finally we had to content ourselves with the big room of a sour milk and cheese shop belonging to a Macedonian, but beautifully situated on the Terazia, opposite the spot on which afterwards stood the Hôtel Moskva.

The Home Minister and the prefect kept their promises, and we saw policemen going from beggar to beggar and telling them to go on Sunday to Mr. Mackenzie's dinner at noon. There were then in Belgrade between five hundred and six hundred beggars, but only thirty came to the first dinner. Some gathered in front of the cheese shop and hesitated to enter until Mr. Mackenzie and I went out and asked them to come in. Most were lame and almost all in dirty, muddy clothes, if not exactly in rags. No women came. We did not sit with them. I stood at the reading-desk placed at the head of the table, and Mackenzie walked from guest to guest, urging them to eat. At the beginning of the dinner I said grace. The dinner consisted of tomato soup with small pieces of vegetable marrow, roast lamb, fresh cheese made of sheep's milk, and plenty of fresh wheaten bread, but no wine (Mr. Mackenzie, being a Temperance man, offered his guests only milk and *boza*, a sour beverage made of fermented rye). I read aloud the 106th Psalm and the Sermon on the Mount. Our guests ate heartily, but were silent, subdued, anxious and uncomfortable. Mackenzie was pleased and happy, and cordially invited his guests to come again next Sunday. But on the second Sunday only seven beggars

responded, and on the third only three. And even these three would not sit down to eat, but said to Mr. Mackenzie: "Sir, if you wish to do something for us, please give us each a dinar and let us go away; we don't want your dinners, nor do we want this gentleman to read to us!"

Poor Mackenzie, how sad and unhappy he was!

Another story about my friend. Frank Mackenzie fell very ill in 1895, and next year, being convalescent, came to my Legation in London to spend a few weeks with me and my wife. One day my good friend and first neighbour, Mr. Henry Wilde, the well-known Temperance speaker and a staunch Protestant, came to see him. They discussed all sort of matters of public interest and apparently agreed on everything. Mr. Wilde spoke also of the progress of the Roman Catholic movement in England, and incidentally mentioned the "silly worship of Saints." Instantly Mr. Mackenzie raised his hand as if wishing to stop the speaker.

"Please, sir, do not say a word disrespectful to the Saints."

Astonished, I said: "Well, I thought you did not believe in Saints."

"There was a time when I did not believe in them, but I believe now. And why not? The spirits of your departed relatives and friends live, why should the spirits of holy men, spirits of apostles, evangelists, holy fathers, martyrs, not live also?" And then he told us of an incident which opened his eyes about the Saints.

Before he parcelled out the field he bought from Mr. Simich into building lots he grew clover on the ground, gathering every evening a quantity and selling it to cart-drivers for their horses. A few Serbs from

Banat, in Hungary, worked for him. One day, early in the morning, he was awaiting them. At last they came, but only to let him know that they would not work that day. Mr. Mackenzie asked the reason why.

"Because to-day is St. Mark's Day. His name is not written with red letters in the calendar, but for all that he is a good and great Saint, and we wish to pay our respect by not working on his day."

"I think you are foolish to lose a day's wages. However, you can please yourselves, but I am going to work myself."

"Dear sir," the Serb labourers replied to him, "you have always been a good master to us and we like you, and just because we like you we advise you not to work to-day. You may offend the Saint, and he may resent it in some manner."

Mr. Mackenzie then said: "I do not believe your Saint will be offended at my working, much less that he will hurt me because I work."

So he went to his field and alone cut down his clover. He was returning home in the evening when his horse suddenly shied at something and threw his rider. Mr. Mackenzie broke his shoulder-bone and was unable to work for at least six weeks. Since that he believed in Saints.

Mr. Mackenzie left his money and property, valued at something like £30,000, to Mr. Harry Grattan Guinness, of the Bow Missionary College, the son of his friend, the Rev. Dr. Grattan Guinness. But he bequeathed nothing to his family and nothing to Serbia, although by a previous will he had left £10,000 for the publication of religious tracts in the Serbian language. No doubt he held the opinion that

Serbia had had her share during his lifetime. His heir thought he had done enough for my country when he gave the municipality of Belgrade a piece of land on which to build a church. Notwithstanding the disappointment (which, perhaps, was over-exacting), the Belgrade people cherish a respectful remembrance of their Scottish fellow-citizen, Frank Mackenzie.

CHAPTER XV

The Failure I Most Regret

I MUST now turn to a subject which has always been a very sacred one to me, and which I desire to discuss with reverence and with equal regard for truth and our national ideals. I would not be a true Serb if I did not carry, in the purest sphere of my soul, the associations of Kossovo. I would not be a true Serb if I could write my Memoirs without taking the opportunity of mentioning the memories of Kossovo. And, as will presently be seen, I have special reasons for that. But, first, a few words of introduction, without which my readers could neither understand my motives nor fathom my deep sadness at my failure.

What is Kossovo? It is a great plain almost in the centre of the western half of the Balkan Peninsula, strategically commanding all the neighbouring provinces. But for us Serbs Kossovo is much less a geographical and strategical term than a term of our national psychology, a term announcing a historical synthesis, proclaiming to the world that the Serbs have been able to transform a military defeat into a moral victory, to develop a national tragedy into a national glory. The bloody battle of Kossovo on June 15th, 1389, between the Turks under Sultan Murad I. and the Serbians under Tsar Lazar, exercised a deep and lasting influence on the Serbian nation, both by the extraordinary and indeed quite unique fact that the Sovereigns of the two belligerent

nations fell on that field, and still more by the fact that Serbia there lost her independence and became a tributary State of the Sultan. The Serbs went to Kossovo to fight "for the holy Cross and the golden liberty" ("*Za Krst chasni i slobodu zlatnu*"). They fought heroically. How they fought you can see from the glorious fact that Tsaritsa Militsa lost her husband (the Tsar), her father (Yug Bogdon) and her nine brothers. And she was not the only Serbian woman who suffered such terrible losses in that battle.

Contemporary bards—and the Serbs had bards throughout all the ages, as they have them in these days—have described the battle and its most striking incidents in their songs, of which many portions have been preserved from century to century. In that way the battle of Kossovo has been re-acted before the eyes of Serbs of every generation. In that way the Serbs have maintained living contact with Tsar Lazar, Tsaritsa Militsa, Milosh Obilich, Ivan Kossanchich, Milan of Toplitsa, and Ban Strahinya.

Listening to the bards' recitation, every Serb of every generation vowed to avenge Kossovo. When in October, 1912, the Serbian army started on its victorious march into Old Serbia and Macedonia, the leaders did not make long and stirring speeches; they only uttered four words, "Let us avenge Kossovo!" And that sufficed to transform Serbian pride, patriotism and poetry into an invisible temple on Kossovo, to which the Serbs went to worship their national heroes and to inspire themselves with faith in the advent of better days. At my suggestion the Belgrade Society of Young Men of Commerce established the custom of celebrating Vidov Dan (the day of St. Veit, June 15th), on

which the battle of Kossovo was fought, as a national festival.

The Serbs consider Voyvode (army leader) Milosh Obilich as the great hero of Kossovo because, reproached with contemplating treachery, he went to the Turkish Camp and murdered Sultan Murad. But in my judgment the really fine and tragic figure in the pageant was Tsar Lazar himself. All that we know of him from historical documents and national songs shows him to have been a kind-hearted, just, brave and noble man and patriot. Although elected Tsar of the Serbs, and although the people called him, and call him to this day, "Tsar Lazar," he never assumed this title, and signed his name on all documents as "*Knez Lazar*," *Knez* meaning "Count." Because he was good, upright and noble, and because he died on Kossovo for "the holy Cross and the golden liberty," the Serb people and Church venerate Tsar Lazar as a Saint. The Serbs admire, and are proud of, their great Tsar Dushan—"Silni" (the Powerful)—but they love Tsar Lazar. His embalmed body has lain through centuries in a silver coffin before the altar of the monastery of Ravanitsa which he built. Thousands and thousands of people have come to Ravanitsa from all parts of the Serb country to kiss reverently the coffin of their beloved Tsar Lazar. The Turks themselves throughout the centuries seem to have respected his memory and to have allowed his body to repose undisturbed.

But when, in 1775, the Austrian army invaded Serbia thousands of Serbs enrolled as volunteers, and the Turks vowed terrible vengeance. And when the Austrians, beaten by the Turks, were obliged to retreat from Serbia, the monks of Ravanitsa, fearing Turkish

vengeance, fled to Hungary, carrying with them the body of Tsar Lazar. They went with their precious treasure as far as Saint André, on the Danube, north of Budapest. On the conclusion of peace they decided to return to Ravanitsa. They had already arrived within sight of Belgrade, at the monastery of Vrdnik in Frushka Gora, when they were met by some of the monks who had not followed them to Hungary, but hidden themselves in the forests of Serbia, and who now came to inform their brethren that they had better leave the body of Tsar Lazar in Vrdnik until Ravanitsa, which had been partly burnt by the Turks, should be rebuilt. The monks in charge of Tsar Lazar's embalmed body had no alternative but to ask temporary hospitality from the monastery of Vrdnik. But the restoration of Ravanitsa progressed very slowly; then came the rising of the Serbs of Shumadia against the Turks and the long struggle for liberty (1804-1813 and 1815-1817). The Ravanitsa monks in charge of the body of Tsar Lazar died out, and the body of the Kossovo martyr remained, and remains to this day, in Vrdnik, Frushka Gora.

Now I come to the subject of this chapter.

In 1874 I accompanied, as a Cabinet Minister, Prince Milan on his tour through Serbia. We came to Chupriya, an important town in the Morava valley, and went to visit Tsar Lazar's church in Ravanitsa, which lies only five miles from the town. Memories of Tsar Lazar and the battle of Kossovo were crowding on us. Prince Milan was by no means insensible to such impressions. The monks showed us the charter (I believe a copy of it) by which Tsar Lazar granted large estates to his monastery.

On the following night I dreamt that a tall, old, but most dignified man, dressed in the gold brocade of ancient Serb noblemen, came to me, took me by the hand and led me to a large sheet of parchment hanging on a wall, and pointed out a few lines towards the end of what seemed to be the charter. I could not read these lines. He seemed somewhat annoyed, dropped my hand and went away. After he left me I suddenly recognised that my dignified visitor was Tsar Lazar. I rushed after him to kiss his hand and—awoke!

I was deeply impressed by that dream. I tried to remember the words he had pointed out, but could not. However, I came to the conclusion that the position of the lines being towards the end of the charter the reference might have been to his request that his body should repose in the Ravanitsa monastery, which he had erected expressly for that purpose. Then it struck me that the Serbs were under a bounden duty to comply with the distinctly stated wish of their last Tsar, that his body should repose in his own church, and that the church of Vrdnik, in which his body now reposed, although surrounded by a Serb population, politically belonged to Hungary. I saw that when, in 1889, we should celebrate the fifth centenary of the battle of Kossovo, the very best way to commemorate it would be to transport the body of our last Tsar from Hungary to the centre of Serbia, to Ravanitsa, which (as I have said) Lazar built for his own grave. I thought also that it would be politically advantageous for Serbia that the Serbs from Bosnia, Herzegovina, Macedonia, Dalmatia and Croatia should come to Serbia instead of going to Hungary to venerate the mortal remains of the Martyr of Kossovo.

Next morning I laid my idea before Prince Milan and tried to induce him to execute the wish of Tsar Lazar. I especially took the trouble to explain how his popularity would be enhanced by such an act, and how the celebration of the fifth centenary of the battle of Kossovo would be tame and empty if we left the body of the Tsar in Hungary, where it had been deposited only by an accident.

"You are a dreamer, my dear Minister," was Milan's Fabian answer. "You see only the beautiful side of things and cannot see the ugly side. You do not see that the attempt to execute your idea would bring me into conflict with the monks of Vrdnik, with the Patriarch of Carlovitz and with the Hungarian Government. Please spare me those conflicts. You know that I have already more troubles than I can bear." And so he had, no doubt, but I thought he would have grasped eagerly at the idea of fulfilling his own and our duty to Tsar Lazar.

We dropped the matter then. Soon afterwards came our war against Turkey (1876), the war of Russia in the Balkans, the Treaty of San Stefano, and the revision of that treaty by the Congress of Berlin (1878). There was no reasonable opportunity of carrying out my heart's desire to fulfil the wish of Tsar Lazar. But I never forgot my dream of Ravanitsa, and when, in 1880, I became Minister for Foreign Affairs I insisted that King Milan should give me permission to try to remove the difficulties which had dismayed him when I, for the first time, spoke to him on the subject. He gave me that permission, in view of the approaching celebration of the fifth centenary of Kossovo, and I began to work.

To my confidential inquiry the Hungarian Govern-

ment replied that they offered no objection to the removal of Tsar Lazar's body from Vrdnik to Serbia, provided the monks of Vrdnik and the Patriarch of Carlovitz signified their consent. I then sent my friend, the well-known Serbian poet, Milorad Popovich Shapchanin—who was very popular not only in Serbia, but also with the Serb clergy in Hungary—on a special mission to the Patriarch of Carlovitz and the monks of Vrdnik. I instructed him to find out the extent of the revenue derived by the Vrdnik Monastery from the pilgrims to the shrine of Tsar Lazar and to offer the monks twice and even thrice as much as compensation, payable to them by the Government of Serbia every year on June 15th. My commissioner returned in ten days, having been completely successful. The monks acknowledged that the body of Tsar Lazar was only temporarily left in their monastery, and showed by their books that their revenue from the pilgrims and visitors was annually an average of not more than 8,000 kronen. He promised them in my name 15,000 kronen every year as compensation, to which they agreed gladly. Nor did the Patriarch of Carlovitz make the slightest objection, and he even promised to officiate with full pomp at the ceremony of the transfer of the body. I felt very happy and thankful, and King Milan was delighted.

But just then arose an unforeseen difficulty. The Russian Legation in Belgrade had in its service as interpreter a well-known Serbian, Danilo Medakovich. He had been secretary to Prince Danilo of Montenegro, had written the best history of that country, as well as several other historical books, and was very popular in Belgrade Society. Of course, he was a great Russophile, and was thought to enjoy the confidence of the Russian

Government. Medakovich wrote a letter to the Serbian Press violently attacking my scheme of transferring the body of Tsar Lazar from Vrdnik to Ravanitsa. His argument was that the Serbian population of Frushka Gora were sustained in their national patriotism by the presence of Tsar Lazar's body at Vrdnik, and if the body were removed the Magyarisation of the Serbs would succeed where so far it had not. The Belgrade newspapers—those which were subsidised by the Russian Legation—sided with Medakovich against me. Public opinion understood at once that Medakovich's letter expressed the views of the Russian Legation and the Russian Government. The larger part of Serbian public opinion was always Russophile. Although our Cabinet had a substantial majority in the National Assembly, my own political friends advised me to abandon my project in view of the "Russian opposition." And as I was not sure of obtaining the necessary credits from the Skupshtina, reluctantly and with sincere sorrow I abandoned further efforts to fulfil the heart's desire of our last Tsar.

This failure has occasioned me more grief and vexation than any other of my official failures.

CHAPTER XVI

The Great War

IMMEDIATELY after the declaration of war by the Central Powers an American periodical offered me an attractive fee for an article of three thousand words, setting forth all I knew about the facts which led to the war. The offer reached me through an English friend who was aware that in April, 1914, I had stated to a Serb interviewer that the European situation—notwithstanding the apparent clearness of the political sky—was very delicate and dangerous, that war might break out any day, and that when it did so it would come suddenly.

Although much tempted by the proposal, on careful consideration I refused it. I thought the time inopportune for a true history of all the visible and some of the then invisible salient facts, while what I, as a historian, would have to say truthfully might be misconstrued, since it might be opposed to the temporary interests of my own people and their allies. I am still handicapped by such considerations, especially as I cannot mention the the names of the persons from whom I received some of my information. But I may be permitted to indicate certain things which may be useful to future impartial writers.

Every student of European events during the thirty-six years 1878 to 1914 must have remarked the chain of fatalities which led to the upheaval. When I con-

template these fatalities—I call them so because they are inevitable; men, statesmen, governments and nations could not help themselves, could not do otherwise—I am constrained to imagine that a higher Power verily makes the history of the world, and that nations and their leaders are only pawns on the chessboard, moved by forces beyond their control.

General Ignatieff's Treaty of San Stefano (1878) led inevitably and fatally to the Congress of Berlin. Humiliated Russia naturally vowed vengeance then and there. I remember that Jovan Ristich, the only representative of Serbia at the Berlin Congress, told me on his return that when, distressed and heartbroken, he went to Count Shuvaloff and asked how he could sacrifice Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austrian occupation, the Count answered, "Don't be alarmed, have patience; in ten years we will have a great war and all this will be changed."

Similarly, Bismarck, inevitably and fatally, had to take precautions against an eventual Russian attack. He went to Vienna and afterwards to Rome and made the Triple Alliance which, again inevitably and fatally, led to the alliance between Russia and France, to whose dual alliance Great Britain—after the period of her former "splendid isolation"—had, again inevitably and fatally, in the long run to accede. The inevitable formation of the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente was the expression of the existence of two groups of interests and tendencies, for the protection of which it was deemed essential to establish these two separate and—notwithstanding the insincere assurances to the contrary—rival organisations. That the leading men of both sides thought them fundamentally antagonistic, everybody who had eyes to see, ears to hear and brains to draw

conclusions, could gather from the fact that the component Powers in each were indefatigably increasing and perfecting their military forces.

The fatality worked in all directions. That part of the Serb people which lived in the territory between the Save and the Danube in the north, Toplitsa Valley in the south, Drina in the west, and Timok in the east, and which by its own efforts won first its autonomy (in 1817) and afterwards its independence (1878) and its Kingdom (1882), felt naturally, inevitably and irresistibly, that it was its duty to work for the liberation and union of all the Serbs who still lived in Turkey and Austro-Hungary. The Serbs in Turkey and in the Dual Monarchy naturally wished to be united with their fortunate free brethren in Serbia. Clearly the fundamental and vital interests of the whole Serb nation were opposed to the vital interests of Turkey and Austria-Hungary. I will not say anything about Turkey except to repeat what one of the wisest, most moderate and most considerate of Turkish statesmen, Hassan Fehmi Pasha, President of the Council of State, once said to me: "We had in old times several prophecies that we should one day lose our territories in Europe. We may do so. But as we won them by the sword, by the sword we shall defend them to the last. We may lose our Empire, but we shall not lose our honour."

As for Austria-Hungary, I can say that I had clearly seen for a long time that fate was pushing her towards a conflict with our own fundamental and vital interests. The Serbs are not such good Christians as to love their enemies, but, as good Slavs and still better Serbs, they are always inclined to do justice even to their enemies. In justice to Austro-Hungarian statesmen, therefore, I

will say that the occupation and annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not spring from any sentimental desire of the Emperor Francis Joseph to obtain compensation for the loss of Lombardy and Venetia. Still less had that policy as its motive the alleged desire of Austria and Hungary to annihilate and exterminate the Serb nation. The fact is that Dalmatia, Herzegovina and Bosnia form one geographical and economical or commercial unit.

Dalmatia is the natural foreland of Bosnia, the latter thus being, of course, the natural hinterland of Dalmatia. Whilst the Turks were powerful masters of Bosnia they often attempted to reduce Dalmatia, but since the Vienna Congress in 1815 gave Dalmatia to Austria, Austrian statesmen began to cast unlawful eyes on Dalmatia's neighbour, which could not prosper without commercial union with her. As mistress of Dalmatia Austria inevitably coveted Bosnia. If we Serbs become masters of Bosnia, as we hope and believe we shall, and if Dalmatia be retained by Austria, or given to Italy, we must fatally and inevitably work to become, sooner or later, masters of our own country, Dalmatia. I mention all this to show how Fate has decreed that the vital interests of the Serb nation shall conflict with those of Austria-Hungary. I seemed to see this opposition develop into a struggle for existence. I feared for the very existence of my people, and on several occasions tried to prevent that danger.

Availing myself of my friendship with Mr. Benjamin de Kállay, the Austrian Minister for Bosnia, my acquaintance with Count Szegvenyi-Marich, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Vienna, and afterwards Ambassador to Germany, and my friendly

relations with Count Khevenhüller, Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, I often discussed the Bosnian question with them. We always spoke confidentially and perhaps rather academically.

My thesis was always this: If the Bosnian question is not settled amicably between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, it must one day lead to rupture. As Russia could not let Serbia be crushed by Austria-Hungary, the Dual Monarchy may run the serious danger of losing not only Bosnia and Herzegovina, but several other provinces as well. That risk would disappear if the occupied provinces were ceded to Serbia. By such an act Austria-Hungary would win the gratitude and friendship of the Serb nation, and there would no longer be a reason for the preponderance of Russian influence amongst the Serbs. An enlarged and stronger Serbia would be far less liable to become a Russian satellite than would a weak Serbia smarting under the wound which the Austrian occupation of those two Serb provinces had inflicted on her. We would give full compensation for Austrian investments in railways, roads, buildings, etc., and grant Austria-Hungary's commerce exceptional privileges, possibly even forming a Customs union (Zollverein) with them.

Mr. de Kállay and Count Szegvenyi-Marich invariably assured me that they were not afraid of a war with Russia on account of Serbia; that even if Austria were beaten she might lose Galicia and Bukovina, but not Bosnia; for if Austria were to cede Bosnia she might as well hand over Dalmatia also. "In other words," they used to finish, "you ask Austria-Hungary to commit suicide out of fear of a war with Serbia and Russia!" Count Khevenhüller used only to laugh and crack jokes.

Before I left Serbia for England in 1889 I feared that an amicable settlement of the Bosnian question was impossible, but I thought we ought to concentrate attention on winning Old Serbia and Macedonia, and leave the Bosnian question to a later time. I had, however, anxieties about the stability of peace since 1900, when King Alexander, having married Draga Mashin, by the help of Russian diplomacy declared himself a partisan of Russia and violently denounced his father's friendship with Austria-Hungary and Germany. The danger increased after the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga, when King Peter came to the throne of Serbia and entrusted the Government to the Russophile and Austrophobe Radicals. Peter, who, wisely and rightly, wished to govern in accordance with modern constitutional principles, could not do otherwise, since the Radicals had a great majority in the country. I often remembered Milan's prophecy that if he let the Radicals govern according to their desire, the Austrians would occupy Serbia within three years of their advent to power. But prophets are seldom correct when they speak of time.

There was no doubt that since 1903 Russian influence had been paramount in Serbia. The leader of the Radical party and—with the exception of the short interregnum of Dr. Milovanovich—almost the permanent Prime Minister of Serbia, Nicola Pashich, was known in the country and in Europe at large as *persona gratissima* with the Tsar and the Russian Government. Vienna, indeed, considered the King and Pashich as merely the faithful agents of Russia. Consequently the Vienna Press, never friendly to Serbia, immediately started a campaign against them and the country. The Serbian

Press accepted the challenge and showed as little regard for the sensitiveness of the Austro-Hungarian Government. Practically the Austro-Hungarian and Serbian Press had been openly at war since 1903, and the hostility grew in violence every year. Pashich, personally a moderate, careful and cautious statesman, sincerely regretted that violence, but was helpless, in view of the constitutional guarantees of the freedom of the Press. My own anxiety for preserving peace between Austria-Hungary and Serbia was increasing almost daily, but having withdrawn from active political life, I had no influence in the country, not even with my old political friends the Progressists, whose organs shared the general hostility of the Serbian Press to Austria-Hungary. Both the Vienna and Belgrade Press, consciously or unconsciously, fostered and fomented excitement, bitterness and hatred, which sooner or later were bound to jeopardise friendly relations.

We nearly had war early in 1909, owing to Austria's formal annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was adequate ground for the Entente argument that Germany induced Austria to take that step with the intention of provoking a general European war. Neither Russia nor France, much less Great Britain, was then prepared for war. It was eminently wise to prevent a European conflagration, though this could not be done without humiliating Serbia and Russia, as well as other Entente Powers. Austria practically declared that she regarded the Treaty of Berlin as a "scrap of paper," and the signatory Powers tamely acquiesced in that wanton interpretation. The Russian and Serbian Press felt the indignity very keenly, but laid the flattering unction to their souls that in a few years the whole situation would

be changed. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria in 1908, and all that happened in the beginning of 1909, created an atmosphere charged with electricity. Even if we put aside the suspicion that it was a deliberate attempt on the part of Austria and Germany to provoke a general war, everybody in Europe, and more especially in the Balkan States, knew that Russia would not long endure the slight of Aehrenthal's success, and that she must, sooner or later—and sooner rather than later—restore her prestige among the Balkan Slavs.

The first consequence of the annexation was that Serbia threw herself into the arms of Russia, thereby increasing Austria's hatred. The second consequence was that it aggravated the secret agitation of the Serbians in Bosnia, which still further deepened the conviction in Austrian military circles that they would have to fight with Serbia. That agitation was very natural, but it was imprudent. The third and much graver consequence was Russia's patent determination to come at once to a full and secure arrangement with Japan, and then amass the largest part of her forces near the frontiers of Austria and Germany. This fact was interpreted by Berlin and Vienna as demonstrating Russia's intention to provoke war, either in secret understanding with France and Great Britain, or on her own initiative, without the consent of these Powers, but in the hope of forcing them to come in later. Everything that was done seemed so logical and so natural, but how inevitable, how fateful!

I do not pretend to know absolutely the true objects of Russian policy in 1910-1912. It would be fair to suppose that Russia simply followed the traditional Balkan policy of liberating Slav territories from the direct government of Turkey whenever she saw a propitious oppor-

tunity. It might even be argued that Russia, in starting the war of Serbs, Bulgars and Greeks against the Turks in 1912, proved that she did not intend to provoke war with Germany and Austria, and only tried to restore her prestige among the Serbs and Bulgars by a *local* Balkan war, which need not cause a European outbreak. But in 1911, when Russia advised Serbia and Bulgaria to come to a reasonable arrangement of their interests and claims in Macedonia and ally themselves for an attack on Turkey, she played the leading part in negotiations which were notoriously very difficult as between Serbs and Bulgars. When, further, she succeeded in drawing the Greeks into that Alliance and made provision in the bond between the contracting parties against any interference of Austria in Serbian affairs, it was only to be expected that various interpretations would be placed on her motives in different capitals.

The Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, whom the British Government considered as its devoted friend, a man of great intelligence and shrewdness, declared on several occasions that, although Turkey was attacked, the real blow was aimed at Austria. I have reason to believe that this view was held in Budapest and Vienna. The partial mobilisation of the Russian troops on the Austro-Hungarian frontier was considered as meant to provoke an open conflict between Russia and Austria-Hungary and so precipitate a general European war. It was a miracle that the conflagration did not take place then, and we were often on the very brink of war even during the Ambassadorial Conference in London. That miracle was due to the statesmanship of the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey.

But this shows how precarious was the state of peace.

Living in London, and sometimes seeing diplomats, I appreciated the difficulties of the Ambassadorial Conference and realised that diplomacy could not always perform miracles, and that consequently the situation of Europe was exceedingly delicate and dangerous. From all I heard about Germany's and Austria's preparations it was easy to conclude that they would precipitate and provoke war because they knew that it was inevitable, that their preparations were far in advance of those of the Entente Powers, and that it was absurd to suppose they would wait until Russia had completed her strategic railways, equipped her ten million soldiers, and the French law of three years' service had begun to bear fruit. In this diagnosis I was confirmed by what occurred after the Treaty of Bucharest of 1913.

This leads me to mention the peace negotiations in London between the Balkan belligerents in the year named. Serbia sent excellent representatives to the Conference in the persons of Andra Nikolich, President of the Serbian National Assembly, Dr. Milenko Vesnich, our Minister in Paris, and the leader of the Progressists, Mr. Stoyan Novakovich, who had been several times Prime Minister, Serbian Minister in Petrograd, and President of the Academy of Sciences and other Academies. All were my personal friends. They brought me a kind message from Pashich, who hoped that, as a good patriot and a man who knew London, I would be ready to assist the Serbian delegates.

My friends invited me to consider myself as an unofficial member of the delegation, and although I never assumed that character and came almost daily to see them only as a friend, they had no secrets from me, and indeed did me more than a chivalrous kindness—

conferred upon me a great privilege, in fact—by asking me to write the Memorandum on the Serbian case for presentation to the Ambassadors of the Great Powers. I rejoiced to be able to assist them in their responsible labours, besides writing articles for the *Daily Telegraph* and *Pall Mall Gazette*. I appreciated their self-sacrifice, because they were among Serbia's ablest and best, and every one of them could write, if not better than, certainly as well as I could. They accepted my draft of the Memorandum with the addition of a few words suggested by Dr. Vesnich. They did me one of the greatest honours of my life by signing it with their names, and enhanced my pleasure by telling me they had been complimented by some ambassadors and French journalists on the lucidity of the style, which "was quite French." Mr. Novakovich assured me that he explained that the delegates had entrusted to me the writing of the Memorandum because they knew that I was one of the few Serbs whose style possessed French lucidity.

Of all the Balkan delegates, Greece's first delegate, Mr. Venizelos, made the best impression in diplomatic circles and in London Society. He looked a born gentleman, of fine manners, consideration for others, dignified, yet natural and simple. He, as well as the Serbian delegates, had to exercise forbearance and patience with their somewhat overbearing Bulgarian colleague, Mr. Daneff, who moved, spoke and conducted himself as if he were the chief of all the delegates. No doubt he was a patriot, of great energy and not a little ability, but he was brusque and lacking in diplomatic address, and, to put it mildly, did not create too good an impression in London.

Rather uncompromising and rough in his manners,

too, was the first Serbian delegate, my political and personal friend from childhood, Stoyan Novakovich. I always regretted his treatment of the Turks whenever his turn came to preside at the Conference. But Dr. Vesnich, by his diplomatic courtesy, and Andra Nikolich, by his kindness and gentleness and his love of what is right and just, soothed the poor Turks. We all, even Novakovich, had much sympathy and respect for Réchid Pasha, because he was great-grandson of Mustapha Pasha, whom (as I have already noted) the Serbs called "the Mother of the Serbs," in grateful acknowledgment of his kindness to the people. Besides, Réchid Pasha was personally a fine-mannered gentleman. Nor can I forget Mr. Take Jonesco, the Rumanian statesman, who came to negotiate with Mr. Daneff about Bulgaria's compensation to Rumania for the latter's friendly neutrality during the war. Whenever I had an opportunity of talking with Mr. Jonesco I was always refreshed, delighted and enriched by an addition to my stores of knowledge.

Although I was in daily contact with the Serbian delegates, I maintained the independence of my opinions. I was strongly opposed to their breaking off the negotiations for peace. Neither my friends nor Mr. Venizelos liked that rupture, but they had to submit to Bulgaria's desire to get Adrianople. I am probably one of the few friends whom the Bulgars have in Serbia, but I did not hesitate to publish in the *Daily Telegraph* my reasons for thinking that Bulgaria's acquisition of Adrianople was against the interests of Serbia. The article caused some sensation in London, and my Bulgar friends were annoyed that I had sounded the alarm at the consequences of their ambition.

At the same time, when I gathered that Serbia would retain for good the Macedonian territories which she had bound herself by the Treaty of Alliance to cede to Bulgaria, but which she had conquered and yet retained, I thought, and repeatedly said, that such a policy was neither right nor prudent. Probably I am more of a doctrinaire than a practical politician. But I held that Serbia ought to respect her own signature in all circumstances. It is true that we had made a bad treaty; that the territories which the treaty declared to be Bulgarian were inhabited by more Serbs than Bulgars; that the events which actually happened were not foreseen by the treaty; that the Bulgars themselves did not comply with all their treaty obligations towards us; that the Serbs conquered Macedonia from the Turks without any direct aid from Bulgaria, and that they went to help the Bulgars conquer Adrianople and Thrace, which was not stipulated for by the treaty. Still, we had signed that treaty, and if we could not obtain Bulgaria's consent to a friendly modification of its terms, we ought, in my opinion, as an honest and honourable nation, to have executed our original engagements.

I must do justice to the Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pashich, and state that he did not repudiate the treaty of February 29th, 1912, but tried to induce Bulgaria to consent to an amicable revision, with due consideration for the actual circumstances and facts. And when the Bulgars refused to listen to his proposal he suggested that they should submit their difference to the arbitration of the Tsar, as was formally provided for in the treaty itself.

Russia found Serbia's demand for revision reasonable and justifiable, and advised Bulgaria to try to come to

a direct understanding with Serbia and Greece too. The Bulgars were surprised and then deeply irritated by Russia's decision, and Austrian agents worked energetically to exploit that irritation. Throughout Bulgaria, and even among the soldiers, Russia was denounced as siding with Serbs and helping to deprive Bulgaria of the fruits of her victory. It was certainly remarkable that, although the Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance was initiated and carried through not only against Turkey, but, at least indirectly, against Austria also, the King of Bulgaria and his Government and many politicians cultivated most friendly relations with Austria. That looked very suspicious, and suggested in my mind that the rumours of a secret treaty between Bulgaria and Austria since the autumn of the annexation year, 1908, might not be devoid of foundation.

Bulgar dissatisfaction with Russia was quickly intensified by a rumour and a fact. The rumour was spread, especially in the army, that Russia prevented Turkey from agreeing to Bulgaria's demand of Midia-Rodosto as a boundary line, and urged the acceptance of the line Midia-Enos instead. The fact was that the Bulgarian Minister in Petrograd, M. Bopchev, informed his Government that the Russian Government would not like to see the Bulgar army enter Constantinople. M. Bopchev advised his Government to abandon such an intention, if they ever had it, else they would come into conflict with the "vital interests of Russia."

Now, it was not only the personal ambition of King Ferdinand, but also the dream of the whole Bulgar nation, to become some day masters of Constantinople. The rumour of Russia's forbidding the Bulgar army from entering Stamboul was backed by the rumour that

Austria-Hungary and Germany had nothing to say against the Bulgars going to Constantinople. There is something tragic in Russia's relations with Bulgaria. Russia organised early in 1912 the Balkan Alliance, in consequence of which Bulgaria won large and most important territories, yet already in the spring of 1913 the latter turned her back on Russia and was following the advice of Austria-Hungary. I cannot explain that *volte-face* except on the supposition that there had existed for some time a secret treaty between the two Powers.

It was evident also that there was a lively diplomatic struggle between Austria and Russia in 1913. Russia desired to save the Balkan nations—and more especially the two Slav nations—from a fratricidal war. Therefore she invited the four Balkan Prime Ministers to Petrograd in order to arrange their dispute by the arbitration of the Tsar. The Prime Ministers of Greece, Montenegro and Serbia were already starting for Petrograd when Bulgaria—as is generally believed, on the advice of Austria—let her army suddenly and most unexpectedly attack the Serbs and the Greeks on the entire front. As is well known, the result was a decisive defeat of the Bulgars.

It is significant that, while all other Powers approved of the territorial rearrangements made by the Treaty of Bucharest, Austria-Hungary was the only dissentient Power. She was, moreover, the only Power which endeavoured to submit the Treaty of Bucharest to a revision by the Great Powers. In this effort she stood quite alone, not even Germany lending her any support. All that was known, therefore, strengthened my suspicion of a secret understanding between Bulgaria and Austria.

And now we know, from the declaration of the Italian Prime Minister, Giolitti, in the Italian Chamber, that Austria, towards the end of July and the beginning of August, 1913, contemplated a declaration of war on Serbia.

After the conclusion of the Peace of Bucharest rumours were rife in the Serbian Press that Bulgaria and Austria had concluded a secret treaty for joint action against Serbia. I heard even then only this one detail, that in the case of success the contracting parties would share Serbia, the Morava forming a new boundary between Austria and Bulgaria, and Serbia becoming extinct as an independent State. Simultaneously the Bulgarian Press published somewhat veiled, but still sufficiently transparent, statements that the Treaty of Bucharest could not be valid for very long, that events would soon happen which would change its stipulations, and that the struggle between Serbia and Austria would soon take place, when Serbia would be sorry for her hostility to Bulgaria. Even *The Times* Balkan correspondent, Mr. Bourchier, re-echoed these views in his telegrams from Sofia.

All these, in themselves probably not very authoritative statements, strengthened my conviction that the situation was extremely delicate and difficult, and that we might have war very soon and very suddenly. This view of the situation was fortified by information from German friends in the second half of 1913, that the impression in Germany was that Great Britain, France and Russia had conspired for the destruction of the German Empire and that their preparations would be complete in 1917. That the impression was a base fabrication was of no consequence to the Berlin War

Lords. The German Government's task, then, was to decide whether it would wait until its enemies were prepared, or, taking advantage of their unreadiness, precipitate the war at once.

So certain was I that war was coming and that the Bulgars would not join the Entente Powers that I wrote a series of articles for the London Press calling attention to the futility of all efforts to draw Bulgaria to our side. But British diplomacy seems to have believed up to the last that Bulgaria could be won; so confident was it, indeed, that the Press Censor would not allow my articles proving the contrary to be published. I still possess some of my articles on the Balkan situation bearing the Censor's veto as a souvenir of those strange days.

Let me now summarise the facts which led to the Great War.

I start from the fundamental known fact of permanent rivalry between Russia and Austria for predominant influence and eventual mastery in the Balkan Peninsula. Their struggle was facilitated by the fact that the two principal Balkan peoples, Serbs and Bulgars, were jealous of each other. Their vital interests came into collision in Macedonia.

Since the Slavonic Ethnographic Exhibition at Moscow, in 1867, one of the aims of Russia's Balkan policy had been to liberate the Slavs from Turkish rule and create a Great Bulgaria including Macedonia. The San Stefano Treaty of 1878 gave full expression to that policy. Until this date Serbia and Prince Milan were sincerely and devotedly Russophile. But when, in that treaty, Russia sacrificed Serbia's claims in Macedonia (having already sacrificed the Serbian provinces

of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria by the secret arrangement of 1875), Prince Milan turned from Russia and looked towards Austria for the safeguarding of Serb interests in Macedonia. From 1880 to 1900 Austrian influence prevailed in Serbia, while Russian influence was paramount in Bulgaria.

In 1900, through King Alexander's marriage with Madame Draga Mashin, Russian influence was re-established in Serbia, and still further confirmed by the accession of King Peter to the throne and by the Radicals definitely taking the government of the country into their hands.

Both Austria and Bulgaria, alarmed by this fact, drew nearer to each other. More especially was this the case when the confidential overture of Prince Ferdinand to Petrograd, as to his country's aspiration to be proclaimed independent and a Kingdom, was not encouraged by the Tsar, but was befriended in Vienna. This led up to a secret treaty between Austria and Bulgaria in the autumn of 1908, which was, I think, concluded for seven years.

Of this treaty the first fruits were the simultaneous proclamation of Bulgaria's independence as a Kingdom (really as a new "Tsardom") and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria. But the further stipulation—namely, the co-operation of Bulgaria with Austria in case Serbia declared war—was for the time being rendered superfluous by Serbia's temporary submission to the advice of the Great Powers of the Entente, Russia not being quite ready for hostilities.

In the beginning of 1912 Russian statesmanship scored a decided success in organising the Balkan Alliance on the basis of the seeming reconciliation of

Serbian and Bulgarian interests in Macedonia and the reference of their differences to the Tsar's arbitration.

One noteworthy fact in connection with the Balkan Allies' war against Turkey was the fact that it was declared immediately on the arrival in Petrograd of Mr. Sazonov from the conferences at Balmoral with Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour and a few other leading statesmen of Great Britain in September, 1912. The war for the liberation of the Balkan nations got its consecration and blessing in Balmoral, but whether the participating statesmen also considered the probable consequences of the campaigning, I cannot say.

The other noteworthy fact is that—although the treaty between Serbia and Bulgaria bound the latter to assist Serbia with 100,000 men if Austria should attack her—relations between Austria and Bulgaria during the war with Turkey were very cordial, Austria, as I have mentioned, even encouraging Bulgaria to enter Constantinople, which Russia formally forbade her to do. By the irony of fate Mr. Daneff, the great Russophile statesman of Bulgaria, of all persons, had to go to Budapest to ask whether Austria-Hungary would object to the Bulgarian army's march to Constantinople. That she did not object can be explained only by the article of the secret treaty which obliged Austria to support the interests of the Bulgarian nation *and its dynasty*.

It is also very strange that, already in the spring of 1913, Austria's influence in Sofia was so strong that she could persuade King Ferdinand and Mr. Daneff not to go to Petrograd to attend Tsar Nicholas's arbitration, but by a military *coup de main* create a *fait accompli* by taking Macedonia from the Serbs and Greeks. Rumour had it that Austria was prepared to support

Bulgaria, if need be, with her whole military force. All this shows the existence of a secret treaty between Austria and Bulgaria. Of this there is further proof in Austria's attempt to obtain the consent of her allies, Germany and Italy, to her attack on Serbia shortly after the defeat of the Bulgarian army by the Serbs and Greeks in the summer of 1913.

Austria's conduct during the conference of Bucharest and immediately afterwards proved her to be a real ally of Bulgaria. It is extraordinary that the diplomats of the Entente Powers in Vienna and Sofia did not see that fact and grasp its meaning. It is true that M. Sazonov was reported to have said to the Bulgarian Minister in Petrograd, M. Bopchev, on June 12th, 1913, that he knew that Bulgaria had rejected Russia and Slavdom and was following the advice of Austria. But would Bulgaria have dared "reject Russia and Slavdom," surrounded as she was by four hostile Balkan States, had she not insured herself by a secret treaty with Austria?

Having lost all influence in Serbia after 1900, and being in danger of losing her influence in Bulgaria, too, if she did not hurry to drag that country out of the abyss into which she had fallen through acting upon her statesmen's advice, Austria-Hungary, in the summer of 1913, came to the conclusion that it was of vital importance to her to compel the Serbs to give up Russian guidance, and to retain and strengthen her influence in Bulgaria by forcing Serbia to cede Macedonia to the Bulgars. Neither object could be achieved without a successful war, and Austria was bent, as all the world now knows, on war with Serbia in August, 1913.

In my opinion it was Austria-Hungary which dragged

Germany into the war. Although quite ready, and indeed contemplating the advisability of precipitating it, Germany, like Italy, refused to follow Austria into war in August, 1913. But persistent representations by Austria-Hungary of her increasingly dangerous position in the Balkans at length prevailed early in the summer of 1914. At the meeting between the German Emperor and the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Konopisht in the first days of June warlike action was decided on, and the assassination of the Archduke in Sarajevo on June 28th (Serbian Kossovo day) gave a plausible pretext for the Austrian-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, which was decided some time before.

I have no doubt that this cataclysmic World War was inevitable, developed out of the Balkan tangle. In that part of Europe lies the commercial and military road from Central Europe to Asia Minor, where, again, runs the connecting link between Asia and Africa. Therefore, whoever may win the conflict of the Balkans shall become master of Asia Minor, provided he has brains and the gift of organising, to say nothing of men, money and courage. A demoralised Power, even if she were to gain an accidental victory in the Balkans, could never retain its fruits.

So far as I know the facts of the Balkan situation —and I have been watching their emergence and development for the last forty-five years—I do not hesitate to say that Austria, and not Germany, provoked the War. But, for practical purposes, Germany and Austria are one body and one soul, and equally share the responsibility for the colossal catastrophe.

To those who assert that Serbia provoked this horrible hurricane of destruction, bloodshed and indescribable

misery, I can only say that such an assertion is not only not true, but, so to speak, even a ridiculous lie.

As a rider to this chapter I propose to amplify a few of the statements it contains in order to make it quite clear why Bulgaria joined the Central Powers. In doing so it will be scarcely possible to avoid some amount of repetition.

From the beginning of the war in August, 1914, the diplomatists of the Entente Powers made strenuous efforts to induce Bulgaria to join the Allies or, at least, to remain neutral.

The Bulgarian Government declared itself perfectly free from every engagement, and stated that it was willing to negotiate with both belligerents, to see which would offer the greater advantages for her neutrality or for her eventual participation in the strife. It also declared that the Bucharest Treaty of 1913 had inflicted grievous injustice and injury on Bulgaria, and that modification of that treaty and the restoration of the territories torn from her and ceded to Greece, Serbia and Rumania must be a *sine qua non* of her friendly attitude.

That declaration made a profound impression on public opinion in Great Britain and France. Some newspapers, indeed, called it cynical, while others admired its bold frankness, but all urged the Entente Powers to negotiate and try to win Bulgaria by further concessions.

I knew that the declaration of the Bulgarian Government was not sincere, that its negotiations were begun only to gain time for war preparations, and that its ultimate decision was a foregone conclusion. As has been mentioned already, in the autumn of 1908 a secret

treaty was concluded between Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary for mutual support and eventual co-operation against Serbia. The first and immediate consequence of that treaty was the consentaneous action of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria in October, 1908—the former proclaiming the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the latter proclaiming herself an independent kingdom. The second consequence was contingent and would have been witnessed had Serbia declared war on Austria-Hungary, in which case Bulgaria would have joined Austria-Hungary and, in the event of victory, have received the eastern part of Serbia, between the Timok and the Morava, besides all Macedonia. That, after rattling the sword in its scabbard for some time, Serbia had, in the end, to abandon every bellicose thought was due to two causes—Russia's then unpreparedness for war and the strong suspicion of an alliance between Austria and Bulgaria.

Knowing well what I knew, I was perfectly certain that Bulgaria would not join the Allies, and that all her so-called negotiations were only a sham to gain time. Now the Serbian Prime Minister, Mr. Pashich, testifies that nothing would have moved Bulgaria to join the Allies, or even to remain neutral. His declarations to the correspondent of the *Petit Parisien* are very interesting and important, throwing new light on the real motives of Bulgaria, whose Government had complained that the Treaty of Bucharest did her grievous injustice. Mr. Pashich tells us that immediately after the declaration of war he proposed to Rumania and Greece jointly to inform Bulgaria of their readiness to modify the treaty in her favour. Besides, Mr. Pashich offered to cede all Macedonian territory on the left bank of the

Vardar. But, as the Bulgars claimed, in addition, Macedonia west of the Vardar, as well as Monastir, the Serbian Government—this time on the advice of the Entente Powers—offered not only Eastern, but also Western Macedonia, with Monastir, reserving to Serbia only the town of Prislip. Bulgaria, therefore, would have secured more than she could legitimately claim, and all that she really did claim, without war.

But she refused every concession and preferred to side with the Central Powers. Why? Because she was bound to join Austria against Serbia in consequence of the secret treaty of 1918, which was a renewal and amplification of the secret treaty between her and Austria in 1908.

CHAPTER XVII

My Record in Serbia

IT is not very modest, but I owe it to myself to say—and I say it because it is easily verifiable—that my name, as Cabinet Minister, is connected with several important laws and reforms in Serbia.

I am especially proud that I was a member of the Government which abolished corporal punishment civilly and in the army, and which saved our country from losing its peasants, through the law fixing the number of acres every peasant must have as a minimum—a holding that could not be sold for any debt whatsoever. I was also a member of the Cabinet which proclaimed Serbia a Kingdom. I introduced the metric system of weights and measures into Serbia, coined the first silver and gold coins of modern Serbia (identical with the French monetary system), re-established the old monetary silver unit of the mediæval Serbian Kingdom, the *dinar*, which, according to Dante, a Serbian King, whom the poet saw in hell for his felony, stole from Venice and counterfeited. King Vladislav, in the middle of the thirteenth century, only did what I effected in the nineteenth—namely, adopted the best model of a silver coin he found in contemporary Europe. I hope I shall not burn in hell for coining a Serbian dinar identical with the French franc! I concluded Serbia's first commercial treaties with the principal countries of Europe, and introduced several reforms, among them the stamp duty (for the

first time in Serbia); but apart from this I was rather a poor administrator and had deficits in my budgets.

As I have mentioned budgets, I may relate how I once figured in the popular ballads of the Serbian bards. In 1873, for the first time, I presented my budget to the National Assembly. While in England I had listened with just admiration to Mr. Gladstone's budget speeches. I accordingly astonished the deputies by a speech lasting over an hour, the like of which they had never heard before. But the effect was contrary to my expectations. Those simple and honest men suspected the soundness of my budget, because they thought a sound budget did not need such a long speech to recommend it. So the leader of the Opposition was much applauded when he massacred my financial proposals.

Prince Milan summoned me to dine at the Palace by way of consolation and to induce me not to resign. While we were at dinner the first police report was handed to the Prince in accordance with the practice of sending to the Palace every two hours a report of what was going on in the town. The Prince read the report aloud. It stated that in the chief coffee-houses (which in Serbia are also restaurants and inns for peasants) the national bards were singing to large audiences the budget debate, representing the Minister of Finance as a new Mussa Kessejiya (a typical Turkish tyrant of old time) and the leader of the Opposition as a new Kralyevich Marco (the Royal Prince Marco), the national hero who, according to a popular old ballad, fought and defeated Mussa Kessejiya. I felt for a moment as if insult had been added to injury. But the Prince and all the guests enjoyed the incident so thoroughly that I had to join in the laugh against myself.

My Record in Serbia

Amongst my services to my country I think I may say that the most important were these: the creation of the National Bank, with the privilege of issuing notes, payable always in gold; and the building of the first and principal railway, forming the Serbian section of the international line from Paris (of course also from Berlin) to Constantinople and to Salonica. I am glad to be able to say that the National Bank of Serbia justified all my expectations and more, rendering very important services to the economical development of the country. About the railway I will have to write in some detail (indeed, I have already said something in an earlier chapter), as it is connected with international questions, and as my work in financing its construction was mixed up with curious episodes and circumstances.

In 1865, as professor of political economy, I had written a series of articles to induce the country to build railways. I had to sustain a violent polemic with another economist who tried to prove that if Serbia built railways and connected them with foreign railways she would never emerge from the agricultural into the industrial state. His arguments were taken from the book of the American economist Henry Carey, who pleaded for the protection of a country's industries against foreign competition. The majority of the Serb peasantry were at that time against the railway, mainly lest, while we were all sound asleep, the Austrian army might use it one night to occupy the entire Morava Valley which divides Serbia into two (unequal) halves. But Prince Michael Obrenovich III., his Government, and most of the merchants and the *Intelligenziya* (the educated class) favoured my views. But the difficulty of finding the money prevented

the Government from undertaking the construction of the railways forthwith.

The first foreigner who suggested the building of the railway in Serbia was an Englishman, Mr. Somerset Beaumont, who came to Belgrade in 1869, only to find the Government of the Regency not prepared to enter into serious negotiations as there was no certainty that Serbia would consent to link up with the Ottoman railway. Mr. Hartley, another Englishman, next proposed to assign to a powerful English company the carrying out of the enterprise. This was just when Serbia was preparing for the war against Turkey in 1876; and the Liberal Government of Ristich, for political reasons, hesitated. These reasons were known to the Austrian Government, and at the Berlin Congress, when Count Shuvaloff advised Mr. Ristich to address himself to Austria, to save what could be saved, Count Andrassy required the Serbian representative to sign a convention binding Serbia to start her section of the international line within three years (by 1881).

When the Progressists formed the Government after the resignation of Ristich in October, 1880, they were confronted with his treaty engagement to begin building the railway the very next year, that is within a few months. Ristich's Cabinet having made no preparations for the fulfilment of the undertaking, as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Finance, I made confidential inquiries whether it were possible to obtain a prolongation of the term for one year. But the answer from Vienna was discouraging. So we had to set to work at once.

M. Bontoux, the general manager of the famous Paris Bank, the Union Générale, was the first to come

forward with an offer. He was followed by General Tchernayeff, as representative of Polyakoff & Co., a Russian firm of railway engineers. Independently we had offers also from a Russo-Belgian group, represented by Mr. Kostitsky, and two French companies and an English one.

We had decided that the railway must be built at the expense of the State and become national property, though its working might be let to a foreign company. The scheme presupposed the raising of a loan. M. Bontoux proposed to lend us the whole of the capital at a certain price and take over the exploitation of the railway for thirty or fifty years. The Russian offer was also similar. M. Bontoux's company was entirely French, but he himself was considered to be an Austrian who had been encouraged by the Austrian Government. Practically, therefore, we had a variant of the old struggle between Austria and Russia, and a very fierce struggle it was. Much money was spent on both sides to secure the concession. Bontoux's proposals were more detailed, more precise, and, on the whole, more favourable than Polyakoff's. But Russia being so much loved and admired by the Serbians, there was a widespread desire to favour the Russian company. The newly formed Radical party, under Pashich's guidance, plumped for the Russian proposals, or for the adjournment of the question for several months. In the National Assembly the Government had a majority, but it was not exactly overwhelming. The Radicals formed a rather strong minority and comprised some able men.

Next ensued a period of intrigue and wire-pulling. A clever doctor who had worked for many years as a

journalist in Belgrade, who spoke and wrote Serbian well, and who knew all the politicians, privately interviewed many influential deputies and promised them sums, varying from 25,000 to 50,000 francs, for each vote for Bontoux' proposals. I found this out after everything had been finished, and M. Bontoux himself gave me the list of the men in the Opposition ranks who had promised either to vote for him or at least to remain in the Assembly and so maintain a quorum. I also got the list of my political friends who had received "presents" from M. Bontoux. His agent, whom I had known since his journalist days, came to me and, assuring me of profound respect, detailed the case of a probably imaginary Hungarian Minister of Finance who took office as poor as a church mouse and left it a millionaire in consequence of the "gifts" of grateful railway companies. The moral was supposed to be obvious, and he thought I owed it to myself to consider my own position.

I stopped him and said that I knew what was due to myself and to my country, and that I was a Serbian Minister paid by his people for his services. As such I did not propose to emulate the Hungarian Minister. When I met the interviewer a year later in Vienna he told me he had been empowered to offer me 300,000 francs.

One day, when we were approaching a final decision, the representative of a competing foreign company (not English) placed in my hand a cheque for a million francs (£40,000) made payable to me. I returned it at once, telling him that I was sorry he had thought it necessary to offer me such a large bribe, since it was quite superfluous if his company's conditions were more advantageous

than the others. I then went to the King to tell him what had happened. The Prime Minister, Pirotyanatz, was summoned while we were talking, and when he came in the King mentioned what he had just heard from me. Pirotyanatz, sarcastic as he always was, said, "Sire, your Minister of Finance is a man known for his lively imagination. Probably the cheque was for one hundred thousand francs, and he thought it was for one million francs."

Anyhow, we settled that I should invite the company which had offered to bribe me to withdraw from further competition.

On the very next morning the same man came to my office and, before I could open my mouth, placed on my desk a cheque for 2,000,000 francs. His company evidently thought I considered the cheque for 1,000,000 francs of the previous day as insufficient. I asked the agent to let me have the cheque for an hour to consider the offer and to return in that time for my answer. I took the cheque to the Palace, asked the King to call the Prime Minister and Mr. Garashanin (the Home Minister), and showed them the bit of paper. Half an hour later I handed the cheque to the agent and bade him leave Belgrade.

I personally rather liked M. Bontoux. He was a gentleman, a fervent Roman Catholic, and therefore very religious and honourable; and his conditions, although somewhat stiff in price for the loan and construction of the railway, were on the whole the best we had. But he was so violently denounced by the Opposition that I thought it well, for political reasons, not to grant the concession either to the Russian Polyakoff (whose terms, besides, were not precise

enough) or to M. Bontoux, whom the friends of Russia represented, rightly or wrongly, as working in the service of Austria.

I proposed to the Cabinet, under the presidency of the King, that we should give the concession to the Russo-Belgian group represented by M. Kostitsky, provided that it would agree to take up the entire loan, nominally four millions sterling. I was authorised by the King and my colleagues to send at once for M. Kostitsky, who lived in a neighbouring hotel, and ask whether his company would do that. M. Kostitsky informed me that his company was sure at that moment of two millions sterling, but seeing that the financial strength and honesty of Serbia were so little known, or rather not known at all, in the financial markets of Europe, they could not take up the whole amount then and there. That answer left us no other alternative but to grant the concession to M. Bontoux.

No doubt he made a splendid bargain with the Serbian Railway Concession. The shares of the Union Générale advanced rapidly from 500 francs to 3,000 and 4,000 francs, and the bank rose to a premier position amongst the financial establishments of Paris. But thereby he attracted the jealousy of older leaders of the financial market. Besides, he made one cardinal mistake. He gave his bank—to which Roman Catholic churches and establishments and the more prominent Roman Catholic persons confided their money—the character of a political institution which dared provoke the Republic. Political and financial interests combined to pull him down from the pinnacle to which he had attained. King Milan always believed that the Jewish, anti-Catholic, Republican and Russian interests combined to smash the Union

Générale. To be candid, while I was in Paris trying to save Serbia's interests from the Union's ruin, I found no proof that Russia had had anything to do with it.

We had about 40,000,000 francs deposited with the Union Générale. As Minister of Finance I was responsible for that money. I hurried to Paris and, by God's help, succeeded in saving my country from any loss. The Government of M. de Freycinet was very sympathetic and helpful. But I had especially to thank Count Goluchowsky, then in charge of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in Paris, and Count Vittalis for the fact that I succeeded in forming a new company which carried out the construction of our railway without any fresh burden to the country.

In the confusion created at the central offices of the Union Générale by the failure, a young Serbian employee somehow got into his hands a pile of private and confidential letters which M. Bontoux had written from Belgrade to his assistant-manager, Colonel Feder. The names of several high personages in the Government and in the National Assembly were mentioned, together with the amounts alleged to have been given to them. There was also a letter in which M. Bontoux expressed his astonishment that I had refused to receive any money. These letters were published, with a Serbian translation, in a pamphlet entitled "The Bomb." Naturally it caused a tremendous sensation. The publication of M. Bontoux's letter about me did me a good turn, because since then even my bitterest political foes, when attacking my policy or my conduct of public affairs, have readily admitted that although I may be a great fool, I am, at any rate, "a man with clean hands." Many of my

friends have deemed me a great fool to refuse to become a rich man and remain always poor. But I am proud of my poverty (if living on a modest pension can be called "poverty"), though sometimes I am tempted to think, while struggling with difficulties in my old age, that really I *was* a fool!

CHAPTER XVIII

In the Suite of the Shah

THE Shah of Persia was in Constantinople on a visit to Sultan Abdul Hamid in September, 1900, and I was presented to him when, on his arrival, he received the Diplomatic Corps in Yildiz Kiosk. I then gave him the message from my Sovereign, King Alexander, who invited him to be his guest in Belgrade. He answered that the invitation afforded him much pleasure, as he had long wished to make the acquaintance of the King of Serbia.

Abdul Hamid gave a banquet in honour of the Shah. Both monarchs were present, as well as all the Foreign Ambassadors and Ministers. The menu consisted entirely of Turkish dishes. Except *kebab* (small square pieces of lamb, sprinkled with finely-cut onions and pepper and roasted on little sticks) nothing was really acceptable to our European taste, especially as everything seemed to have been cooked in rancid butter. After the banquet, which took place at noon, we adjourned to a drawing-room, where the two Sovereigns held a reception. On that occasion I noticed what a difference there was in the bearing of the Persian and Turkish dignitaries. While the latter stood quietly and humbly in the presence of their Sovereign, bowing deeply and salaaming whenever the Sultan addressed a word to them, the members of the Shah's suite were quite at their ease. The Grand Vizier of the Shah spoke to his Sovereign perfectly *sans*

gêne, as though to an intimate friend, once, indeed, in a very lively manner, as if remonstrating or quarrelling with him. I asked the Persian Minister, Prince Mirza Khan (a famous Persian poet) how that was, and he accounted for it by the fact that the Shah and Grand Vizier had been intimate from early childhood and educated by the same tutor.

I had to inform the Sublime Porte that I would be absent from my duties in Constantinople for a week or so, as I had to accompany the Shah to Belgrade by order of my King. The Mustechar (General Secretary) of the Foreign Office, Noury Bey, one of the ablest Turks I ever met, answered, "I ought to congratulate you on the honour of being a Mihmandar [personally attached] to his Majesty the Shah, but I am afraid the duty will be somewhat trying."

My trials began before we left Constantinople. If Europe thinks that punctuality is a virtue in a King, Asia evidently views unpunctuality as one of his distinctive features. I had to wait (in "undress" diplomatic uniform) nearly an hour at the station before his Majesty arrived. We started about six instead of five in the afternoon, and the delay dislocated the whole programme. One of the directors of the Orient Express, in special charge of the Imperial train, wishing to regain some of the lost time, ordered a speed of about thirty miles an hour. We had been travelling at that speed for half an hour when his Majesty, alarmed and horrified, commanded the train to be stopped at once, sent for the director, and told him he must not let the engine be driven so recklessly. He also wished to learn whether all precautions had been taken for the safety of the train in the dark, and requested the director to promise that,

during the night, the train would proceed very cautiously and slowly. Halil Pasha, one of the Sultan's aides-de-camp and acting as Turkish Mihmandar, had a hard task to reassure his Majesty. The Shah did not seem at all comforted, but reluctantly consented to the train's starting, but only at half-speed—*petite vitesse*. He shouted after the retiring director, "Remember, *petite vitesse—petite vitesse—toujours—petite vitesse!*"

And we did progress—if it could be called "progress" by *petite vitesse*—to such a degree that the citizens of Sofia and the military guard of honour at the station were kept waiting more than an hour for our arrival. I ought to say that I was much impressed by the splendour of the reception which Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria gave to the Shah, although the latter did not seem to appreciate it. The Prince placed his entire Palace at the Shah's disposal, and as I was attached to his suite I had an opportunity of seeing the elegance and beauty of the Palace, and admired it very much. It was, in fact, the hospitality of a French Grand Seigneur which Prince Ferdinand offered. I was sure the capital of Serbia would beat the capital of Bulgaria in the cordiality of its reception, but I felt also, with sad jealousy, that we should be unable to rival it in splendour and elegance.

My troubles as Mihmandar grew very serious in Sofia. At the Turco-Bulgarian frontier the Turkish suite wished to take leave of the Shah, as the mission with which the Sultan had entrusted them ended there. But the kind-hearted and amiable Shah would not let them go, wishing them to accompany him to Sofia and Belgrade. Consequently, I wired at once to King Alexander that three Turkish officers, one of them a Pasha and aide-de-camp to the Sultan, would arrive with the Shah in

Belgrade. In Sofia I found, to my annoyance, the following open dispatch from King Alexander: "As the Sultan has ceased to be the Suzerain of Serbia, his officers cannot accompany the Shah on Serbian territory. You must not allow those officers to cross the Serbian frontier; certainly they must not enter the train which will bring the Shah from Tsaribrod to Belgrade!"

I was in a fix. But presently I thought I had found a solution of this diplomatically difficult situation. I spoke to the Shah's Grand Vizier and, with his consent, wired to King Alexander, "Turkish officers will enter Serbian territory as Shah's personal guests, not as Sultan's representatives. He has invited me to accompany him as his guest to Budapest."

I imagined the question was settled in a way satisfactorily to my Sovereign's susceptibilities, as he evidently suspected that the Sultan had ordered his men to accompany the Shah to Belgrade in order to prove that Serbia still belonged to the Ottoman Empire. I knew positively that that suspicion was baseless, as the Turks already desired to return home from the Bulgarian frontier.

But when we reached Tsaribrod, the Serbian frontier station, I was handed a fresh dispatch from King Alexander: "You are strictly to execute my order already sent to you."

I did not hesitate a moment, but sent this telegram to my Sovereign: "I cannot execute your order; in Belgrade will explain why."

In Tsaribrod a special Commission, with General Yotza Petrovich at the head, was to greet the Shah in the name of the King and on behalf of the Serbian Government. Naturally, the General immediately came to me, as I had to introduce him and his colleagues. After

this had been done the General told me that the King's orders were that they were not to allow the Turkish officers to enter the Serbian Royal train, even if they had to use physical force. The General was my personal and political friend, a man of great intelligence and culture, and I had no difficulty in showing him the dangers with which such a course was fraught, as it would be an insult not only to the Turkish officers and their Sultan, but also an insult to our country's guest, the Shah, and I easily persuaded him to leave the whole responsibility for the non-execution of the King's order to me.

But my troubles were not yet over. I went to the Shah to request him to leave the Imperial Ottoman saloon in which he had travelled from Constantinople to the Serbian frontier and pass to the Serbian Royal train. The Shah answered: "Please wire to your King that I thank him for having sent me his Royal train, but I am comfortable in this carriage and do not wish to leave it until we reach Belgrade."

It was of no use explaining, as I did, that my Sovereign and our country wished his Majesty to do us the honour of using our own Royal carriages and train, and that it was an established rule of etiquette that Sovereigns on their journeys should always use the trains of the country through which they travelled.

The Shah only kept on repeating, "Merci bien! But I am quite comfortable in this carriage."

I invoked the help of the Grand Vizier, who at once took me to the Shah, telling me on the way that he had already told him we should have to change into the Serbian Royal train. He spoke at first quite quietly to the Shah, but began to warm up, talking more rapidly

and in a louder tone (in Persian), so that it looked as if he were scolding his Sovereign, and then—to my astonishment and delight—he took the Shah by the hand, raised him from his seat, and led him out, asking me in French to show them the way to the Serbian train. Of course, he had acted rather as an intimate friend than as Grand Vizier.

At Nish the Serbian military and civil authorities and a great crowd of people gave a hearty welcome to the Shah. He came out to receive the report of the military commander of the place, and after that was finished a Serbian woman stepped from the crowd and handed him a small bunch of flowers. He accepted them smilingly. Next moment the cordon of police and soldiers was broken and hundreds of women and girls pressed around the Shah, tendering bunches of flowers. In a minute he had his hands full, and was delighted with this spontaneous outburst of courtesy. The scene was charming, and the men in the crowd cheered the Shah lustily. When the train started again his Majesty invited me to sit with him in the saloon, and asked me to tell him something about the history of the Serbs. He was especially desirous of knowing about our great poets. I took the opportunity of telling him that one of the glories of which we were proud was our national songs on old national heroes and our *guslari*, or bards. He apparently took keen interest in what I told him, and asked if a *guslar* were attached to the Court of the King of Serbia, as he would like to see and hear him. Unfortunately, no *guslar* was attached to our Court.

From time to time he complained that the train was going too rapidly, and insisted that its speed should be reduced. Thus we arrived everywhere too late. Instead

of reaching Belgrade at four, we reached it at 5.15 P.M., when the crowds were somewhat thinned, as many people, tired of waiting, had gone. King Alexander, surrounded by a brilliant suite of officers of all arms, the Government, the State, municipal and even ecclesiastical dignitaries, were waiting at the station. I was, however, astonished to hear that the Shah was to be lodged for the night not in the New Palace, but in the Hôtel de Paris, which, although nearest to the Palace, was the least modern of the newer hotels. The organisers of the reception thought they had done enough when they hung the walls of the rooms with Serbian Pirot carpets, in glaring red colours. It was painful to note the difference between the elegance of the Shah's dwelling in Sofia and the simplicity of his accommodation in Belgrade.

But that was not the sole disappointment for which not the Shah, but my own people were responsible. The grand banquet in his honour was to be held that evening in the New Palace at eight o'clock. I was informed that an equerry from the Palace would come to tell me when to bring the Shah and his suite. Shortly afterwards an equerry said that I might bring the Shah at once. The Court carriages were waiting in front of the hotel, and in full gala attire we drove to the New Palace.

I expected to see the King at the threshold of the New Palace to receive the Shah and lead him inside to the reception rooms, but he was nowhere to be seen. Instead, the Marshal of the Court led us to the great saloon where, on one side, the Foreign and Cabinet Ministers, Councillors of State, other dignitaries of State and Church, and the notabilities of the city were

already lined up. The Shah was led to an arm-chair at the top of the room, the members of his suite and his guests placing themselves in a row on his right, and facing the opposite line of diplomats, Ministers, etc. There was no one to introduce the diplomats and Ministers to the Shah, and we gazed at each other in silence and astonishment.

After waiting for nearly a quarter of an hour King Alexander appeared at the side of Queen Draga, who was walking slowly in a loose robe. It was, in fact, the Shah who received the King of Serbia under the latter's own roof, instead of Alexander's being the host and extending a hearty welcome. The Shah was a man endowed with good natural tact, and he never mentioned anything to me about this *manque de tact* on our part, but I know from other persons that he was a little bit annoyed.

Even yet I had not reached the end of my Persian troubles.

Before the banquet the Shah sent to Queen Draga a rare Persian Order for ladies, to her sisters jewels, and several Orders and presents to the members of the King and Queen's households. After the banquet, with his suite and myself and General Petrovich as his special guests, he left for the Hungarian Royal train at the Belgrade station, where it had to remain for an early start in the morning to Budapest.

Before midnight a high official of our Court came to my compartment of the train with a strange message from Queen Draga. Her Majesty, it appeared, was dissatisfied with the "paltry jewels" which the Shah had sent to her two sisters and the ladies of her Court, and wanted me to speak to his Majesty and try to rectify

the error and get him to send better presents to her ladies. I could hardly believe my ears.

"What did you say?"

Queen Draga's message was repeated, and he added that nobody was satisfied with the presents, and produced a list of persons attached to the Court and officials of the Foreign Office, with indications of presents considered suitable.

The official himself expected a cigarette-holder of gold (*étui*) encrusted with precious stones.

Not unreasonably indignant, I told the official that nobody had a right to disgrace the Serbian Court by such an extraordinary demand, and that I certainly would not demean myself by bringing such a request to the Shah's notice, and must decline to have anything to do with it.

"In such event, which was foreseen," I was told, "I am instructed to follow his Majesty to Budapest and there submit to his Highness the Grand Vizier the suggestions for the correction of the—no doubt unintentional —mistakes."

And he actually travelled with us to Budapest and had an interview there with the Grand Vizier. I could not, for very shame, ask whether he had succeeded.

Along with General Petrovich I continued a guest of the Shah for three days in the Grand Hôtel Hungaria, and tried to forget my troubles as an unfortunate Mihmandar by listening for hours to Hungarian rhapsodies played by genuine Magyar gipsies.

CHAPTER XIX

The Peace Conference at The Hague

AS Serbian Minister to the Court of St. James's and at the same time to the Court of Holland, I was appointed the first delegate of Serbia at the first International Peace Conference which met at The Hague in the summer of 1899. The second delegate of Serbia was Colonel Mashin (the brother-in-law of Queen Draga), and the third Dr. Voyslav Velkovich, who, although very young, had already won reputation as a first-class expert on questions of International Law.

This appointment I considered then, and still consider, as the highest honour done me during my public career. The very idea of the Conference emanating from Tsar Nicholas II. was grand and noble indeed, and appealed mightily to my Serbian soul, fundamentally a Slav soul.

German Universities (1862-65) had made of me an idealist and humanist, singular as this may now appear in the light of Germany's infamous atrocities and her deliberate violation of the laws of God and man in the Great War. I was longing for a permanent world peace in which to establish and develop a real brotherhood of nations, making the whole of mankind one and the same family. I therefore hailed the Tsar's ideal as the highest possible: a big step towards the brotherhood of man by the prevention of war through general disarmament. The time I spent at The Hague

was the grandest of my public career. It gave me a unique opportunity of making personal acquaintance with some of the ablest statesmen, diplomatists, lawyers, and representatives of the armies and navies of Europe, America and Asia. I need only mention the names of Admiral Lord Fisher and the United States naval expert, Captain Mahan, to show the quality of men I was meeting.

Of course I clearly perceived the enormous difficulties in the way of the Tsar's reform. The reconstruction of Europe at the Vienna Congress had not followed natural and healthy lines, and had, in fact, created an artificial and, therefore, unwholesome Europe. In my first speech at the Conference I dared to allude to that condition, and suggested that we could arrive at disarmament and stable peace only by seeing that justice was done to all nations. I had in view, particularly, the injustice wrought to the Serb nation by Austria-Hungary's occupation of the two Serb provinces, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

But, to my surprise, I found almost all the representatives of the Great Powers cool and sceptical. At any rate, nowhere could I discover any enthusiasm for the Tsar's ideal. Disarmament seemed to be a hopeless task from the very beginning. The only practical results attainable were to try to reduce the cruelties of war by international agreements. And this was all that *was* done. Unfortunately the agreements were signed, but not kept, as my gifted and eloquent young colleague, Dr. Velkovich, foresaw.

I ought here to do justice to the memory of my friend William T. Stead. I have said that the majority of the delegates were cool and sceptical, without faith in the cause which had called them together. Then

Stead arrived to undertake a task which I deemed impossible. He saw the situation at a glance. He, who had overabundant and sparkling enthusiasm for the Tsar's ideal, at once embarked upon a regular agitation to impart fresh and vigorous life into the Conference. He went from delegate to delegate of the great and small Powers alike, and spoke to them of the grandeur and beauty of the Tsar's ideal and of their own task. He succeeded in making some of us ashamed of our lack of faith. And, thanks to Stead, there was a perceptible rising in the warmth of intercourse among the members of the Conference and in the energy of their work. No really great man could ever refuse to receive him, and we small men were delighted to have him talk to us. Later he began to be considered as part and parcel of the Peace Conference, and finished by becoming something like its *enfant gâté*.

He succeeded in another apparently impossible task. He, who could speak very little French and no Dutch at all, started in The Hague the publication of a Franco-Dutch newspaper, publishing in French and Dutch the reports of what was going on in the secret sittings of several committees of the Conference or in its plenary sittings. After every sitting he rushed to visit all the more important members, and although the latter—in conformity with the initial resolution—refused to give him full information, most of them gave him "hints" from which he constructed tolerably exact reports of what had taken place. We all considered him a wonderful journalist. I may mention that he introduced me to another distinguished journalist, Dr. Dillon. I came to the conclusion that Stead and Dillon were the two best-informed men in the sphere of the Peace Conference.

I was sorry that Dr. Dillon did not remain longer at The Hague.

The Government of the Queen Mother of Holland entertained us lavishly. At their expense all the members lunched—or at least could lunch—at the charming Huis de Bosch in which the sittings were held. And those luncheons, with exquisite wines and cigars and cigarettes, were quite royal. Besides, they organised a series of balls, concerts and festive performances at the theatres. The Society of The Hague rivalled their Royal Court and Government in hospitality. With pleasure I remember how the most popular member of the Conference in the Society of the Dutch capital was Lord Fisher. None of the younger diplomats, not to mention the older ones, could compete with him in elegant and graceful waltzing. I, an elderly person, but once a great and passionate dancer, admired him immensely.

Very soon France's representatives, with Léon Bourgeois at their head, naturally took the first and most influential place in the Conference. The German delegates, Prince Muenster, Baron de Stengel, Dr. Zorn and Colonel Schwarzhoff, were rather heavy, silent and reserved. They were known to be there only out of courtesy to the Tsar, but otherwise were the embodiment of strenuous opposition to the suggestions for disarmament. The United States' delegation was composed of remarkable men, under their Ambassador to Berlin, Mr. Andrew D. White; they made a great impression, and won for their country and themselves the highest respect. In my opinion, amongst the most distinguished members were the first Turkish delegate, Turkhan Pasha, and his assistant, Noury Bey. They were reserved and modest, but every member felt their

natural distinction and always found them perfect gentlemen. I became their admirer, especially when I discovered in Noury Bey an ardent student of history who had the knack of describing episodes of Turkish history in the most graphic manner. I learned from him interesting details of Turkish history at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Among the delegates of the Balkan States the chief place was easily won by Rumania's first delegate, M. Beldiman. He tried to organise us into a special Balkan group, and I gladly accepted him as leader.

But, after all, during the whole session of that first Peace Conference, no one produced such an impression on a certain occasion as our Serbian delegation did. We Serbs are naturally open-hearted and earnest. My two colleagues and I somehow felt that the restrictions and limitations for the conduct of war, proposed and adopted, were not really very sincere. We knew that, notwithstanding the efforts of the Conference, the interests of small nations would, in the future, as in the past, be sacrificed to those of the Great Powers. So we decided to speak plainly and to let our colleagues of the Great Powers know that we were not blind. The suggestion came from my colleague, Dr. Velkovich, and as he had perfect French (having obtained his degree of Doctor of Laws in Paris) and was a brilliant speaker, he was to speak on our behalf.

At the plenary meeting of the Conference to discuss a special convention restricting and limiting the usages of war he was called on by the chairman, M. Bourgeois. The gist of his speech amounted to this: All these limitations and restrictions would be respected and

fulfilled by the small nations, because the Great Powers would, if need be, force them to recognise the obligations, whatever they might be; but, on the other hand, the small nations had no power to compel similar obedience on the part of the great nations, which would not hesitate to disregard them absolutely whenever they found it to their interest to set them aside. For this reason the deliberations of the Conference lacked sincerity because they lacked comprehensiveness and were one-sided.

The effect was extraordinary. No one had spoken in that august and austere assembly with such frankness. It was as if a bomb had exploded in that beautiful hall whose walls were covered with oil paintings by the greatest Dutch masters.

As I write this, and in view of the conduct of Germany from the very beginning of the Great War, it seems to me the very Irony of Destiny that that Serbian bomb of frankness and sincerity brought the German delegate, Dr. Zorn—who hardly ever spoke—to his feet to protest against the assumptions of the Serbian delegate. Then the chairman, M. Bourgeois, delivered a speech the like of which for eloquence I had never heard before in the whole of my life, and which had no equal among those delivered before or later in that hall. It was universally admitted to be the finest speech during the first International Peace Conference. M. Bourgeois' plea was that both moral and international law do not recognise any difference between great and small nations. The consecration of international agreement is not conditioned by material, but by moral force, emanating from the conscience of civilised nations and the sanctity of international agreements. These simple statements,

almost so to say *lieux communs*, were spoken with such eloquence that all the members present, young and old, were fired with an enthusiasm of which the Conference had never been thought capable. They rose to their feet and cheered and applauded the French statesman. Many congratulated Dr. Velkovich on a threefold treat: the first, the piquancy of his engaging audacity; the second, the spectacle of the German Zorn aroused to speech; and the third and crowning treat, M. Bourgeois' wonderful eloquence. Everybody acknowledged that that sitting of the Conference was one of the most interesting.

I shall never forget the honour and pleasure of my first informal audience of Queen Wilhelmina at The Hague. I had been first received officially by the Queen Mother, her mother, and then told to come about six o'clock in the evening to the Palace, to be informally presented to the young Queen. The Queen Mother did me the honour to take me to her and left me there. Queen Wilhelmina looked a perfectly charming girl, half child, half woman. She felt proud that the first International Peace Conference had taken place in Holland's capital, and had no doubt that the deliberations of the most experienced statesmen and diplomatists would furnish beneficent practical results. Girl though she was, she spoke with the assurance and authority of a grown-up woman. She asked about my public career in Serbia and abroad, and when I told her that I had begun as professor of political economy she immediately stopped me, saying: "Oh, I am so glad to hear that! I am taking a course in political enonomy, and I find it a most interesting and useful science. I think I like it almost as much as I like history, and I am aware that it may prove more

useful even than history. In these modern and democratic times a Sovereign ought to study the laws of national economy because they form an important part in the life of a nation. I hope your King has studied political or national economy."

I told her gracious and graceful girlish Majesty that I believed King Alexander did study political or national economy, as I knew his tutor (I meant Dr. Dokich) was a Radical democrat and a cultured man, although I was not familiar with the extent and course of his studies.

"Ah!" the young Queen went on. "If you are not sure, tell him, as a message from me, that he *ought* to study political economy. It is indispensable for a monarch in these days."

I had been already a considerable time with the young Queen when an attendant entered and whispered something to her, to which she said something like "All right." Presently, while she was giving me her message to King Alexander, her mother entered, to whom, with girlish glee, she said: "Fancy! I was talking to the Minister on the importance of national economy and didn't know that he was himself a professor of the subject."

"And I am sure," the Queen Mother said, "the Minister will approve of my coming in to mention a practical side of national economy, namely, that dinner has been waiting for some time."

The young Queen, a real girl, enjoyed her mother's joke, laughed, and dismissed me graciously with these words: "I am so glad you were professor of national economy. I hope to see you again. And do not forget my message to your King."

At The Hague I made the acquaintance of one of the most interesting women in the world. At a reception and concert Stead brought to me a little woman with dark eyes and rather pretty, square face, whose age might have been forty or forty-five. "Here is a friend of mine. She is president of the German Women's Peace Society and just returned from Petersburg, where she presented to the Tsar an address on behalf of the German women. She has every claim to my courtesy and friendship. But, as a journalist, I am too busy. I entrust her to your courtesy and friendship. Her name is Frau Professor Margarette Selenka." And then he ran away.

She was really a very interesting woman. Her speciality was zoology, and the hobby of her life was to search for "the missing link." For years she had been digging in Sumatra and Java in quest of that desideratum, and spent much of her own money. In the forests of Java she learned "the monkey language," and once, in the Zoological Gardens in Regent's Park, London, she spoke, in my presence, to two walking apes which were not exhibited to the general public, but were kept in a special room below the chimpanzees' house. Besides, she always took a very lively interest in all humanitarian movements, such as the establishment of a permanent peace, the brotherhood of nations, the re-organisation of society on the basis of the social and political equality of the sexes. She was also a charming woman, though sometimes her utter disregard of Society's conventions exasperated even her best friends, of whom, I flatter myself, I was one. She likewise took a deep interest in occult phenomena and psychic sciences.

Speaking of occult phenomena, I remember a peculiar

incident which had some connection with my membership of the first Peace Conference. To my great regret my Government would not authorise me to sign all the conventions we had discussed and voted before the Conference had separated. On my return to London I went one day to see a lady, a friend of mine, who was a clairvoyante. On receiving me she said: "So glad you've called, as I have something to tell you. Quite recently my thoughts have been suddenly fixed on you, and I had a vision that your life was endangered by a locomotive. You must take care not to go near an engine." She told me this one day towards the end of August.

At the end of October I unexpectedly received a telegram from my Government ordering me to go at once to The Hague and sign, on behalf of Serbia, all the conventions voted at the Peace Conference. I left London by the night train, reached Flushing early in the morning, and, after a slight breakfast, was proceeding to take my place in the train for The Hague. The guard was conducting me to a first-class carriage separated from the engine by only one or two other carriages. The moment I noticed that, I remembered the vision of my clairvoyante friend. I asked the guard whether he could not give me a place in some other carriage?

"Yes," he said. "There is a corridor carriage at the end of the train, but I am afraid you will be badly shaken there."

I took a seat in the last carriage of the train. Our journey was quite commonplace as far as Rotterdam, but on leaving that city we encountered a very thick fog and, half an hour later, our train collided with

another, both engines and many carriages were smashed, twenty-six persons were killed, and fifty-three wounded. If I had not been warned by my clairvoyante friend, and had taken a place in the carriage nearer to the engine, I would probably have been killed or maimed in that accident.

CHAPTER XX

My American Impressions

THE first suggestion that I should go to the United States to lecture on Serbia and the Serbians was given to me by a former Attaché of the Serbian Legation in London, Voyslav M. Petrovich. We knew that, since the outbreak of the Great War, influential Serbian Relief Committees had been formed in New York City and large towns in the United States, though the results of their efforts were disappointing. We had heard that by the end of 1915 they had collected altogether about 200,000 dollars in aid of the suffering Serb women and children, whereas within the same period 7,000,000 dollars had been collected for the Belgian sufferers. What was the reason for the difference? Evidently the Americans knew Belgium and the Belgians very well and little of Serbia and the Serbs. Could we not help the Serbian Relief Committees by touring throughout the United States, telling the generous people who the Serbs were, what services they had rendered to liberty and the Christian civilisation of Europe, what were their political and social aspirations, and what claims they had to the sympathy and friendship of the civilised world?

I declared to my friend that, although in my seventy-fourth year, I would gladly undertake such a tour in the service of our people, provided that the travelling expenses were paid. Mr. Petrovich, a young man of bold initiative, then told me that a British Society,

full of sympathy for Serbia and the Serbs, was ready to contribute handsomely towards the expenses. Before I decided to go I was, as a State pensionary, in duty bound to obtain leave from the Serbian Prime Minister to undertake such a mission. Mr. Pashich not only gave me his formal permission, but sent me five thousand francs to cover my travelling and other expenses. Then I had to go.

I still, however, had some misgivings. My lectures on Serbia and the Serbs might increase the knowledge of my listeners, but would they succeed in warming their hearts and moving them to give of their means to the relief of Serbia? I had been several times Minister of Finance, and ought to have been an expert in picking the pockets of the people, but I hated making an appeal for money, and, indeed, did not know how to do it. Mr. Petrovich came to the rescue. He suggested that I should approach that great and eloquent friend of the Serbs, Mrs. Pankhurst, with the request that she would join me in my Serbian mission to the people of the United States. Mrs. Pankhurst most generously acceded to my request, moved thereto not only by her admiration for the heroism of the Serbs and her compassion for their suffering women and children, but also by the consideration that British women ought to do their utmost for the Serbs, since the British Government, in her opinion, had not done *their* utmost for them. Of her own free will she declared that as long as she was with me in the States she would confine her speeches and addresses exclusively to the Serbian Relief question. And that promise she kept faithfully and scrupulously, often to the bitter disappointment of the suffragettes in the towns of the United States and Canada, who longed to hear

the famous leader of their British sisters. Mrs. Pankhurst took with her, as her secretary, Miss Joan Wickham, a remarkably clever and hard-working lady and a veritable organising genius.

I must say that, for reasons incomprehensible to me, some efforts were made, by persons unnamed, to discourage Mrs. Pankhurst in her devotion to Serbia and prevent her from joining in my voluntary crusade, while not a few attempted to persuade me to go to America alone. But I considered it a very great honour that Mrs. Pankhurst had consented to accompany me to America and appear on my platform in the United States and Canada, and I had reason to be thankful to Providence that she was with me. And I will at once say why.

The Serbian Minister in London, Mr. Matha Boschkovich, to whom I owed Mr. Pashich's permission as well as some financial support, wired to the Serbian Consul-General in New York, Professor Pupin, that I was coming, and asked him to facilitate my work. Some Serbs and Jugoslavs, who had been in the United States, had already told me, while I was in London, that I ought not to rely much on Professor Pupin, as, being a very wealthy man, he might not put himself to much trouble, and he also rather deprecated other Serbs going to America for purposes of agitation, somehow considering the Republic as—so to speak—his private preserve.

I could not accept such a description of the character of our Consul-General, and, with full confidence, addressed myself to him, expressing my readiness to co-operate with him and his New York City Serbian Relief Committee. To my astonishment he told me that he and his Committee would co-operate only if I placed myself entirely at their disposal and under their control.

I laughed at that modest suggestion and naturally refused it. From that moment he not only did not help me, but wrote to Serbian Relief Committees in different towns of the Union and told them not to assist me and to ignore my presence if I visited them; he also attacked me by a variety of unfounded statements in his Serbian paper.

As this was my first visit to the United States, and I was thus an absolute stranger, I should have been paralysed and forced to abandon my lecturing tour and return to England. Then Mrs. Pankhurst came to my rescue. She appealed to her friends in many of the principal towns, and they readily and successfully organised splendid meetings. Most of them were held in the largest theatres or public halls, some in schoolrooms adjoining churches, some in the churches themselves. During a tour of nearly three months I spoke only in Cleveland, Pittsburg and Boston without the assistance and support of Mrs. Pankhurst's friends. In all other towns it was her popularity and the devotion of her adherents which procured me the privilege of addressing large audiences of American men and women. In New York City itself we addressed no fewer than six meetings, of which three were in the drawing-rooms of distinguished ladies. Again, on our tour through Canada, the meetings in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and other places were arranged by Mrs. Pankhurst's friends. Therefore, I repeat that I cannot sufficiently bless my lucky star that I had the *nous* to invite Mrs. Pankhurst to go with me to America to serve the Serbian nation, nor can I ever thank her adequately for honouring myself and my nation by joining in that service.

On the second day of our arrival in New York City Mrs. Pankhurst went to visit some influential friends,

and on her return informed me that several persons had expressed their astonishment that she should come to America to speak for the Serbs, who were not much liked because they were the cause of this terrible war. Austro-Hungarian diplomats and consuls had scattered broadcast a pamphlet in which they tried to prove that Serbia had provoked the war, and that the Serbs were responsible for the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. These assertions were iterated and reiterated by the German Press in the United States and created a hostile prejudice against Serbia in many parts.

In view of these underground tactics, I decided to introduce my public addresses with a point-blank disclaimer, somewhat to the following effect:

"As it has been and is being asserted that I profess to be an official representative of the Serbian Government, and even of King Peter himself, let me say quite frankly and plainly at the very outset that I am in no sense an official or semi-official representative either of the Serbian Government or of King Peter. It is true that I have come to America with the knowledge, approval and support of the Serbian Government, but only as a private Serb who wishes to prove to you that the Serbs as a nation are worthy of your sympathy and friendship. But we would not be worthy of your sympathy and friendship if the assertions of our enemies were true that we were responsible for the Sarajevo assassination, and that we had provoked this great and terrible war. These are calumnies and totally false." And I proceeded to prove why these assertions were untrue. My repudiation of Serbia's responsibility for the assassination of the Archduke and our condemnation of that crime were always and at all meetings greeted with prolonged

applause. This showed that public opinion not only abhorred the deed, but rejoiced in learning that Serbia abhorred it also.

All the meetings at which Mrs. Pankhurst and I spoke were crowded with sympathetic men and women. Whenever I mentioned the bravery of the Serbian army against overwhelming odds—three enemies attacking us on as many fronts—the audiences grew enthusiastic in their demonstrations. So also they were, whenever I said that, although we had had to retreat, we had never been beaten in open battle, and that, although our country had been occupied by the enemy, we had not lost faith in ourselves, our Allies, or our God, and, therefore, in our final victory.

Mrs. Pankhurst held very strongly that the war must be carried on until the Allies won a decisive victory and Germany was rendered incapable of further mischief. Such passages were always greeted by a storm of cheering. She always spoke with admiration of the Serb nation, and her appeals for help for the suffering women and children evinced wonderful eloquence and profoundly affected her hearers.

Not only at our meetings, but also in private life we found conclusive proofs that by far the major portion of the American nation sympathised sincerely with the Allies. There were, no doubt, pacificists who thought that guarantees for a lasting peace could be secured without further bloodshed, but they were in a hopeless minority.

At the same time, I did not notice any bellicose disposition anywhere. The overwhelming majority of the citizens proved their sympathy with our cause by sending large amounts in cash and shiploads of provisions, Red

Cross necessaries, doctors and nurses both to the Serbs and Belgians—and more especially to the Belgians—and even went so far as to undertake the manufacture of ammunition and arms for us, but—they were not willing to fight for us, although some prominent politicians suggested such intervention.

As an observer, striving to judge everything impartially, I was not surprised at this reluctance to side with us in the war, though the Americans fully recognised that we were fighting for great ideals. But I was astonished at another fact. President Wilson thought it his duty to draw the attention of the people of the United States to the grave situation of the country, namely, how absolutely unprepared it was to meet any sudden foreign crisis, and how it ought to set to work at once to remedy this state of things. But the President's agitation, at least while I was in the States, fell on deaf ears—so far as I could judge from the Press and from private conversations with politicians. This was by no means a sign of lack of patriotism, for I had plenty of evidence that Americans were very patriotic, and that their patriotism rapidly infected Serb, Croat and Slovene immigrants (these three forming the Jugoslavs) and transformed them into Americans. So that the obvious indifference must have been the result of something missing in the public character of Americans.

Other circumstances led me to the conclusion that the fusion of the various races in the States has not yet been consummated. The Republic exists and the great democracy exists, but the complete type of national individuality has not yet emerged. The Americans are not yet one nation—*totus, teres atque rotundus*. I have beheld the immensity of their Republic,

admired the vitality of their expansive democracy, been deeply impressed by the vastness of their wealth and their untiring energy in creating still greater wealth, but the Americans did not reveal to me their national Soul. It may, of course, have been my fault, not theirs, that I missed the revelation.

We Slavs—Russians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bulgars—although poor in material wealth and living, after all, in an untoward environment, possess imagination and poetry, and our soul is filled with the highest aspirations. During the three months I spent in America I had the honour and pleasure of making the acquaintance of some of the best citizens. The charm and fascination of the women and the intellectuality of the men were admirable, yet it seemed to me—though I hope I am wrong—that they were lacking in imagination and poetry. More than that; the whole nation appeared deficient in a sense of the loftier ideals, not conscious of the rôle which Providence has entrusted to the great democracy between the Atlantic and Pacific. Is not America, lying between these two vast oceans, to stretch out her right hand to Europe and her left to Asia and draw them towards her as to the centre of the World's liberty and culture, the nexus of the union of all the nations?

In Chicago and in Pittsburg I had to address large Jugoslav meetings which contained also many Americans. I spoke of our national aspirations. Through the victory of our Allies, with whom we were faithfully co-operating, we hoped to realise our first national ideal—the union of Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, Dalmatia, Croatia and Slovenia into one independent, free and happy State, probably to be

called Jugoslavia (the country of the Southern Slavs). This first ideal of ours realised, Jugoslavia will find a still more glorious task awaiting her, a still greater ideal to be worked out, namely, to federate all the independent national Slav States (Jugoslavia, Czech-Slovakia, Poland and Bulgaria) with Russia. Then the United States of the Slavs will immediately enter into closer union with Great Britain and the United States of America, to form a federation of all the nations, with Washington as its capital. Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Czechs and Russians among my listeners applauded that political vision (call it dream-phantasy if you like) frantically, but the Americans did not respond. I confessed to a charming lady of Chicago who was present how disappointed I was that the American section of the audience did not seize the point.

"My friend," she answered, "you ought not to expect us to be warmed by 'Zukunfts-Musik.'"

"That is," I replied, "because, as a nation, you lack imagination."

I am speaking of the average citizen. Here and there I met men and women who were not only remarkable, but quite exceptional—far above the average. As I had not come in an official character, I had no claim to the honour of being received by President Wilson. As a man who, in his own country and at several Courts in Europe, had occupied important positions in the public service, however, I thought it my duty to pay my respects to him in the most unobtrusive form, so I merely left my card at the White House. I have, therefore, no personal impressions of President Wilson to record. But his activity during my visit, and all I read and heard about him then and since, suggested to me that he was by

no means doctrinaire, but one of those rare Americans who have imagination and ideals. Some call him a dreamer. But every idealist is not necessarily a dreamer, nor is every dreamer necessarily an idealist. That the Americans have twice elected this same idealist as their President, however, does not prove that the majority of Americans are men of imagination and idealism.

But I had the honour to meet two great Americans who, in their own way, are men of imagination and idealism. I call them great, because they are not merged in the greatness of their country, but by their own individuality contribute something to its greatness. And how different in character the two were—ex-President Taft and ex-President Roosevelt. It was worth while to make the journey from London to New York only to have the honour of meeting them.

I went from New York to Poughkeepsie to speak on Serbia and the Serbians at a meeting arranged by the American Red Cross. The principal of the famous girls' college—Vassar College—invited me to be his guest. It happened that ex-President Taft arrived on the same day to inspect the college and to address the eight hundred students. I had the honour of dining with him that evening, and afterwards I spoke at the meeting in the Town Hall from the same platform from which Mr. Taft spoke. He was the personification of natural simplicity, unaffected dignity and kindness. I saw in him a reincarnation of the ancient Greek philosopher, looking hopefully above the narrow horizon of his country to the distant but glorious horizons of an all-comprehensive humanity, the brotherhood of nations and a lasting peace. Apparently nothing could ruffle the dignity of his calm personality.

Ex-President Roosevelt was an altogether different type, or, I ought rather to say, was no type, but a unique and exclusive personality. I was introduced to him in the editorial office of an American magazine, and I at once felt as if I had entered an electrical furnace. The man who grasped my hand and shook it violently was a living, moving, walking, talking electric battery. But he reassured me at once and charmed me by telling me how he admired the ideals of the Serbian people, how he admired the bravery of the Serbian army, how he was so much interested in Serbia that he had acquainted himself with Serbian history and Serbian national songs. He knew all about Tsar Dushan, Tsar Lazar, the battle of Kossovo, and the resurrection under Karageorge and Milosh. I was astounded and delighted. I shall never forget that interview with ex-President Roosevelt. He encouraged me to deliver lectures on Serbia and the Serb people at the American Universities, and himself gave me introductions and recommendations to two of these corporations. If Mr. Taft appeared to me the reincarnation of a Greek philosopher, Mr. Roosevelt impressed me as a somewhat modern, because in modern costume, reincarnation of thunder-wielding Zeus himself. When I returned to my hotel I felt as though electric sparks sprang from the tips of my fingers to everything I touched.

I will pass from ex-President Roosevelt to a theme which is quite soothing, because it is beautiful. I was often honoured with an invitation to spend a day or two as a guest in American private families. I found their family life a perfect idyll. All American houses, even if they are only cottages, are commodious, comfortable, and well furnished. A great feature in all were books,

flowers and music. In all, too, I found the sweet aroma of exquisite naturalness and high culture. The mother is the holy centre, around which a happy, tender, loving and worshipping circle—composed of husband and children—moves. This family life is by far the best and the most beautiful thing I saw in the United States. Sometimes I found that my host and hostess had fallen in love with each other while studying at the university, married after they had passed their examinations, and ever since had supported each other in all their work. I was frequently struck by the scientific education of American women. The greatest impression which I had in the United States was made by Vassar College, near Poughkeepsie, Bryn Mawr College, near Philadelphia (both for young women), and the Universities of Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Chicago, the last-named of which has been so munificently endowed by John Davison Rockefeller. I left the United States with the impression that their people consider rightly that the future greatness, glory and happiness of their country and the safety of Democracy are based on knowledge which only great and "live" universities can supply.

Although Mrs. Pankhurst and I were most cordially received everywhere, and although I addressed very sympathetic meetings in New York City, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, Providence, Hertford, Hamilton, Poughkeepsie, Pittsburg, Irvington and other towns, grateful remembrance must ever assign the first place to the meeting in the Belasco Theatre, Washington, because there we were honoured with the presence of the Ambassadors of Serbia's Allies, their wives and many of their friends. The British Ambassador happened to be

absent from Washington, but Mr. Barclay, the Councillor of the Embassy, came.

I close this chapter with grateful recognition of the work of the Serbian Association, Narodna Odbrana, which, between the outbreak of the Balkan War in autumn, 1912, and the end of April, 1916 (when I left America), had collected by voluntary contributions from Serbian workmen in the United States £50,000 to help the wounded soldiers and suffering people at home.

CHAPTER XXI

The Claims of Long Descent

THE strangest incident that happened to me while I was in the United States was my meeting with two men who honestly believed they were descendants of the old Serbian Royal dynasties. "Prince Stephan Uroshovich Nemanyich" I met for the first time in New York in January, 1916. "Prince Lazarovich Hrebelyanovich" I had known many years before, when he was a lieutenant of dragoons in the Austrian army and signed his name simply at Eugen Cernucky von Hudecek. He was a brilliant young officer, and, later, when he came to England (in 1901) and I saw him almost daily, his intelligence and knowledge both of strategy and of the military history of Europe, to say nothing of his fixed idea that he was a descendant—or, rather, the only descendant—of the ancient dynasty, fascinated me. Although he had no convincing reason for his belief, or perhaps just because he had none, I took great interest in him, and we became good friends. Our friendship cooled off, however, and I never thought I would see him again. Certainly I never dreamt we would meet in America, when he told me at once that he was no pretender to the throne of Serbia.

This chapter will read like a romance, and I wish I could write it in worthy style.

Let me first tell you about "Prince Stephan Uroshovich Nemanyich," of Brooklyn.

He came to see me at my hotel twice or thrice, and that I did not return his visit was due to the illness of his wife. He was a well-dressed gentleman, not lacking in distinction, of rather spare build, fine-featured, fair, and apparently intelligent and cultured.

He told me he was a descendant of the last Serbian Tsar, Urosh Nemanyich. I drew his attention to the fact that Tsar Urosh died in 1371, childless, and could not have had descendants. He assured me I was mistaken. There was a conspiracy, organised and headed by King Vukashin, to exterminate the Nemanyich dynasty. Tsar Urosh was murdered by Vukashin, but Urosh's son had escaped, first to Bosnia, then to Hungary, and at last to Scotland. His descendants had lived in Scotland throughout the centuries and, while taking a prominent part in the Scottish wars, had never forgotten their descent from the last Serbian Tsar of the Nemanyich dynasty. Some fifty years ago his father had emigrated to Australia, and he himself left Australia to settle, in the first place, in New Jersey. I asked whether he had any documentary evidence of his claims, and he said he would produce it when I went to see him in his home and give me copies of it. But, as mentioned already, I never returned his visit. However, I received several sheets, backed on the last page by a municipal certificate (under the official seal) that all therein stated had been sworn to as having taken place. These papers disclosed an extraordinary story.

First of all, "His Royal Highness Stephan Uroshovich Nemanyich" appointed a Montenegrin to be the Patriarch of Serbia, an American to be his Secretary of State, and another American to be his Great Lord Chamberlain.

Next followed the minutes of a grand ceremony.

"His Royal Highness" was seated on a throne-chair, accompanied by the Patriarch, Secretary, and the Great Lord Chamberlain. His Holiness then opened proceedings with due solemnity:

"Is Your Royal Highness prepared to make before us your solemn oath that you will respect the constitutional rights, liberties, and privileges of the Serbian people?"

"Yes; I am ready to do so."

"Then rise," instructed the Patriarch, "lift three fingers of your right hand, and repeat after me the words of the oath."

Accordingly the Patriarch read the oath, which "His Royal Highness" repeated word for word. This done, the Patriarch, Secretary, and the Great Lord Chamberlain went to the Mayor and, in his presence, made an affidavit that "His Royal Highness" had taken, as described, a solemn oath to respect the rights and liberties of the Serbian people.

Of course, this document threw some light on the claims of "His Royal Highness."

His younger son, of whom he spoke with great pride, wrote informing me of the principles on which his education had been based by his father. Some of them were good, but one shocked me. "My father," the young boy wrote, "always tells me never to forget that God gave us words in order that we might conceal our thoughts." I answered that such a principle was entirely wrong, that it would be a shame even for the commonest of men to use words to conceal his thoughts, but a still greater shame for a boy to do so whose father professed to be a descendant of the old Serbian Kings.

"His Royal Highness" must have been angered by that audacious letter, for he dropped all further intercourse with me.

Turn we now to the history of "Prince Lazarovich Hrebelyanovich," which is more serious and more romantic. I must tell it not only because it is full of romance, but also because Princess Lazarovich Hrebelyanovich, in her own "Memoirs," mentions my relations with her husband, and I owe it to myself to qualify at least one of her statements.

One day in 1875 an elderly, good-looking man came to my house in Belgrade and inquired whether I were the Serbian Minister who was married to an American lady.

I told him that my wife was English, but as she had spent several years in Boston, and published many of her poems (all anti-slavery) in American papers, many people thought she was an American. I then asked him who he was and why he had come to me. He answered in language that was a peculiar mixture of English and German:

"My name is Augustus Boyne von Lazar. I enjoy a small pension from the United States. I come from Minneapolis, Minnesota, where I left my son in charge of our small farm, and I came to Serbia in search of a family treasure buried under the ruins of an old castle which once belonged to our family."

I did not smile. In a former chapter I have said that people come to Serbia from all parts of the world, seeking permission from the Government to search for treasures buried in old times by their families who were unable to take them with them in their flight from the Turkish invader.

My visitor next produced, from an ample pocket, a Bible, from which he extracted several sheets of paper with a certified affidavit that they were a true copy of an original manuscript which a man had stolen from its lawful possessors and which, when on the point of arrest, he had thrown into an open fire; part of the manuscript had been rescued and formed the subject of the annexed certified copy.

The document was written in Brandenburg in 1737 (I do not remember month and day), in pretty good German, by one Andreas Boyne von Lazar. It was a memorandum for his four sons, to whom he communicated the fact that they were descendants of a "Prince in the Serbian Country," Lazar by name, who, as a boy of seven, had been rescued from a burning home and the bloodthirsty Turks by a faithful servant, Jephraim Naduzdats, who took him to a forest in Shumadia, where thousands of people found shelter from Turkish atrocities. The refugees were delighted when the boy was brought to them; they carried him in their arms, kissing him and exclaiming: "Thank God, our Obilich is saved!"

Then the memorandum proceeded to describe how one day, when the boy was twelve years old, the servant Naduzdats took him for a walk on the road between Sokol and Belgrade. Then the servant asked him: "Do you see that hill there with ruins on the top?" And when the boy answered, he continued: "That castle belonged to your family who were princes of this country. Come, and I will show something to you."

The man took him to the ruined castle, entered a cave or underground passage, and, stopping before a huge stone, pressed on certain parts, drawing the atten-

tion of the boy to these parts. The block turned on its axis and disclosed a narrow passage through which they crawled into a space that looked like a high-vaulted chapel. It was filled with iron boxes and barrels containing gold and silver coins, and around the walls were shelves of books and parchment rolls. In the centre stood a large round table of polished malachite on which lay some crowns, golden goblets, and a square box containing what seemed to be a numismatic collection.

"This," explained the servitor, "is the treasure deposit of your family. We cannot bring it out now because the Turks would take it from us. But the time may come when you will be able to remove it for the benefit of our people. But to assure you that this is not a dream and that you have really been in the treasury vault of your family, take a silver coin from the box as a souvenir."

That silver coin played a romantic rôle later. Andreas Lazarovich (or Andreas Obilich) gave it instead of an engagement ring to a pretty peasant girl in Silesia. When she was abducted from him by force he, being a tall, handsome young man, took service in the bodyguard of the King of Prussia, Frederick the Great.

Some years afterwards, on the occasion of a Court ball, he was standing as halberdier at the door of the salon in which Frederick was receiving his guests. A beautiful lady entered and made a deep obeisance to the King.

Andreas was struck by her features and eyes, which reminded him of his poor village fiancée. He heard the King say to the lady: "Countess, I notice you always wear a peculiar bracelet with a small medallion. What is it?"

"It is a silver coin, Sire!" answered the lady. "I love it because it is a souvenir of the earliest and dearest romance of my life."

Frederick asked the director of his numismatic cabinet, whom he had sent for, whether he could identify the coin in the Countess's bracelet. After minutely examining it, he said, "We have no such coin in your Majesty's collection. All I can say is, it looks very like the silver coins of Venice."

(This observation satisfied me that the story was true, because the Serbian silver coins of the Middle Ages were remarkably similar to the Venetian silver coins, a fact which Andreas Lazarovich or Obilich would not have known.)

When Andreas retired from the army the King of Prussia gave him a house in Brandenburg with the right to use it as restaurant and inn. As he loved to regale customers with stories of the wars in which he had served, calling the war often by the Serbian name "Voyna," people gave him the nickname "Boyne."

I asked the Minnesota man why he called himself "von Lazar." He answered that he did not know exactly, but believed it was the name either of Andreas's father or of an ancestor. He wondered why the people in the Refuge Camp in Shumadia called Andreas "Obilich," nor had he any idea who Obilich was.

For the benefit of those readers who are not familiar with Serbian history, though his name has already appeared in these pages, I may say that Milosh Obilich is to this day one of our most popular heroes. He is believed to have married the youngest daughter of Tsar Lazar. Denounced to his father-in-law for treason during the impending battle of Kossovo he, in his indignation

at that calumny, and to give convincing proof that he was no traitor, rushed to the Turkish camp, asked an audience of the Sultan and slew him.

It is possible the Turks had shown some consideration to the descendants of Milosh Obilich, and left them in possession of some estates and political influence in the north-western part of Serbia (Loznica-Shabats) until the insurrectionary movement about 1695 under the leadership of Andreas's father, probably Knez Lazar Obilich, warned them that their indulgence might be a source of grave danger.

The last lines in the manuscript stated that the writer would describe to his sons orally the marks and surroundings by which they would identify the hill with the ruins beneath which their family treasure was buried. And Augustus Boyne von Lazar told me, smilingly and with perfect assurance, that he knew them all, otherwise he would not have made the formidable journey from Minnesota to Serbia.

To cut a long story short, I gave him official permission to search for his family treasure, suggesting that he should search in the north-western part of Serbia between Sokol, Loznica and Shabats, where, according to tradition, Obilich's estates once were. He searched for nearly two years, but found nothing. One summer day in 1878, however, he told me he had found the place, and had come to ask for a company of soldiers or policemen to protect him, because he was afraid the peasantry might kill him and carry away the treasure.

I did not ask where it was, but explained that before I could request the Home Minister for protection (I was then out of office) he must be doubly sure that he had found the place. Therefore I advised him to return to

verify closely all the marks and signs and then wire to me "All right!" whereupon soldiers or policemen would be sent to him. He answered that though he was positive he had found the place, he would do as I suggested.

I did not hear from him again, but a few weeks later a man came to my house and informed me that in a small cottage in a vineyard near the town a man lay dying who was constantly calling out my name. Driving to the place I found my Minnesota friend virtually *in articulo mortis*. He remembered me and in vain tried to say something. I took him at once to the hospital, called the three best doctors (amongst them the King's doctor, Dr. Vladan Georgevich), but they could not save him. He died in three days. I paid for his funeral, walked alone behind his coffin, and afterwards published a paper on "A Possible Descendant of Obilich."

Several years after this was published—I believe it was in 1885, while I was Minister in London—I received a letter from an Austrian lieutenant of dragoons, Eugen Cernucky von Hudecek, from Budweis in Bohemia, asking whether I had ever written anything about some descendants of Knez Lazar, and if I had, where it was published. He added that in his mother's family there was a tradition that they were the descendants of Knez Lazar. I sent him full information concerning Augustus Boyne von Lazar as well as the address of the publisher of my paper. When, early in 1886, on my way from London to Nish, to receive instructions for the peace negotiations with Bulgaria, I spent a day in Vienna, Lieutenant Cernucky paid me a visit. I gathered from him then that his mother was a relation of the Brandenburg family of von Lazar, which had branches in Saxony,

Zwickau and Chemnitz. I remembered that Augustus von Lazar did receive some letters from Zwickau.

On my return from Bucharest to Belgrade, in March, 1886, I received several letters from his mother, who signed herself "Princess Hrebelyanovich," and kept up a correspondence with my wife until her death in 1888, if I remember rightly.

I think it was about that time that King Milan reproached me for having put "a fly into the brain" of an Austrian cavalry officer who imagined that he was the direct descendant of the Tsar Lazar of Kossovo memory and, with that fixed idea, had tried to induce some young Serbian officers studying in Vienna to serve under him as the lawful claimant to the throne of Serbia. The King said also that the Austrian Government, having obtained proofs of his strange action, had arrested the officer, placed him in an asylum at Prague under the observation of three specialists in mental disease, and, on their report, asked him to resign the army.

I told the King what I thought of the whole matter, and later, in England, I often repeated the following theory to Mr. Eugen Cernucky, who began to call himself Eugen Lazarovich.

It is an historical fact that Tsar Lazar's son Stephan died childless in 1427. As there was no direct male descendant the nearest male relative, George Brankovich, the son of Tsar Lazar's eldest daughter Mara, was called to the throne of Serbia. But as the Turks were in the habit, in different parts of the Empire, of maintaining the scions of old influential families as hereditary local chiefs of a Christian district, it was possible that they had maintained in the country between Loznica and Shabats the descendants of Milosh Obilich as such

chiefs, to whom the people and the Turks gave the title of "Knez." Towards 1695 in that part of Serbia the hereditary "Knez" was Lazar Obilich, father of the writer of the document of 1737.

At that time the Austrian army had invaded Serbia. Knez Lazar Obilich formed a regiment of Serbian volunteers and marched with them as the advanced guard of the Austrian army against the Turks. That action explains the massacre of his family by the Turks, from which massacre Andreas Obilich was saved by his family's servant Jephraim. The Turkish chroniclers of the war mention that the Austrians gave the leader of the Serbian volunteers, first, the title of "Count," and later, that of "King of Serbia." But when the Austrians were defeated by the Turks and began to retreat, the leader of the Serbians was taken prisoner by the Turks and cruelly put to death in the town of Vranya. Augustus Boyne von Lazar was probably the descendant of Knez Lazar Obilich. Although it is not yet historically proved, popular tradition and the Serbian national ballads declare that Milosh Obilich was the husband of one of Tsar Lazar's daughters. It is, therefore, possible that Augustus Boyne von Lazar was in that way connected with Tsar Lazar of Kossovo memory, especially if it could be established that Knez Lazar of 1695 was an Obilich.

When, in 1902, Mr. Eugen Lazarovich came to London, though he saw me frequently he never professed to possess any other proof of his descent from Tsar Lazar except the relationship of his mother with Augustus Boyne von Lazar. Taking that relationship for granted, I drew his attention to the importance of ascertaining who Knez Lazar Obilich, the father of Andreas Obilich (the writer of the paper of 1737), really was. As the

Turkish chroniclers mention that the leader of the Serbian volunteers was made "Count" by Austria, I advised Mr. Lazarovich to go to Vienna and search the State Archives for evidence as to the personality of that leader whom I believe to be identical with "Knez" Lazar Obilich, father of Andreas. But his wife, in her "Memoirs" (published in New York in 1914), says that I advised her husband to appeal to Austria to support his claims. I never did that. First of all I never believed in the seriousness of his claims, as he could not adduce any proof that I could deem satisfactory, and, secondly, I knew as well as he did that the support of Austria, which was most unpopular with the Serbs, would ruin even the best cause. Therefore I could not have advised him to appeal to Austria.

On March 16, 1903, Mr. Lazarovich and I happened (as already recorded) to be at Mowbray House, the office of the *Review of Reviews*. In one of the rooms I saw the American interpreter of Shakespeare's heroines, Miss Colquhoun, and went to pay her my respects. While I was talking to her Mr. Lazarovich, standing only two or three paces away from me, was evidently impressed with her. When I left her he, almost in her hearing, inquired who she was and, on learning her personality, begged me to introduce him to her, and this, with her leave, I did.

Some weeks later Miss Colquhoun desired me to tell her confidentially all I knew about Mr. Lazarovich's descent. I related the story to her, such as I knew it and as the reader now knows it. A few days later Mr. Henry White, the Councillor of the United States Embassy in London, met me at a reception by Mr. Balfour, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

He told me that Miss Colquhoun had come to the Embassy with a young Serbian gentleman who claimed to be the direct descendant of the old Serbian Royal dynasty and whom she proposed to marry. Mr. White, anxious to learn to what extent the claim had been recognised, if at all, I briefly recounted the chief features of the case.

When Miss Colquhoun and Mr. Lazarovich next went to the Embassy, Mr. White mentioned what he had heard from me, and Mr. Lazarovich thereupon flew into a temper and vowed he would demand satisfaction from me at the sword's point. But Mr. White submitted that it would be simpler if he (Lazarovich) were to produce the proofs of his claim. He further suggested that we four—Mr. White, myself, Lazarovich and Mr. Ford, the husband of Miss Colquhoun's dearest friend—should meet at Mr. Ford's house, where Mr. Lazarovich could then show the proofs of his claims as a rejoinder to my statement.

Well, we met at Mr. Ford's house in Westminster, where Mr. Lazarovich brought a large leather box apparently filled with documents. Mr. White, acting as chairman, asked me to state what I knew about Mr. Lazarovich's claim. I repeated what I had told him at the Foreign Office reception. Then Mr. White called upon Mr. Lazarovich to substantiate his claim.

Mr. Lazarovich opened his leather box. "I have here," he said, "several proofs; but, not to waste your time, I will produce at once my most convincing evidence." And he handed to Mr. White several sheets of paper. Mr. White began to read them aloud. They were written in German and comprised the report of the three experts on mental disease under whose

observation Mr. Eugen Cernucky von Hudecek had been placed, as already stated.

When he had finished Mr. White asked Mr. Lazarovich how he considered a report on his mental condition a proof of his descent from Tsar Lazar.

"In this way," Mr. Lazarovich answered. "The paper you have just read proves that Austria tried to get me pronounced insane. Why? Because she knew that I was the descendant of Tsar Lazar and might become dangerous to her."

"Oh!" remarked Mr. White, "if you consider this medical report to be a convincing proof of your claim, then we had better say good-bye to each other and not waste any more time."

I do not know Mr. Ford's whereabouts, but the Hon. Mr. White, I am sure, could and would corroborate what I have written above.

To do Mr. Lazarovich justice I ought to say that, throughout all our intercourse, he never told me that he assumed, or intended assuming, the rôle of pretender to the throne of Serbia. When I saw him in New York in 1916 he assured me explicitly that he was not a pretender to the throne, although he still firmly believed he was descended from Tsar Lazar. He never concealed his dislike of King Milan, my great friend, or his admiration of King Peter. He hated Austria and loved Serbia. Both he and his wife have done a service to our people by their book on the Serbian nation (published in New York in 1914). I say this in spite of the fact that their account of the recent history of Serbia strikes me as defective, while their work in other respects is by no means beyond criticism. That Mr. Lazarovich did not mention my name among the literary men of Serbia did

not hurt me at all, although I knew it to be a sort of *quid pro quo* for my view of his claim. In my opinion he is an intelligent, clever, and able man and a true patriot, but has no right to call himself "Prince Lazarovich Hrebelyanovich." His wife, a handsome, charming and gifted American and an artist of considerable skill, may, if she so chooses, call herself a princess in her own right, and I shall always kiss her hand respectfully whenever I meet her.

But it was passing strange that on the democratic soil of the great Republic I should meet two men who claimed to be Serbian princes.

CHAPTER XXII

Canadian Impressions

I HAD the good fortune (and it gave me very great pleasure) to meet in New York City Miss Helen (Leila) Lozanich, the charming and clever daughter of Mr. Lozanich, Rector of Belgrade University, who in 1900 took my place in the Serbian Legation in London. I was delighted to find how excellently Serbian women were represented in the United States. With the charm and fervent patriotism of a Serbian girl she combined the independence, courage and initiative of an American girl, as well as the knowledge of a German and the *esprit* of a French. She is the most prominent of our Serbian suffragettes, and served our country by travelling in the States, from town to town, addressing meetings on Serbia and the Serbians. I felt grateful to my dear American friend, Madame Mabel Grouich, for helping to some extent to train and develop her young friend Leila Lozanich into such an admirable type of womanhood. To me, an old friend of her parents, she behaved during my stay in America with the devotion of a daughter.

She was the first to suggest to Mrs. Pankhurst and me that we ought to tour through Canada. She loved the American people, but about the Canadians was simply enthusiastic. She wrote to some of her friends, and we soon received an invitation to Montreal and Toronto. Captain Seferovich, Consul of Montenegro in New York,

to whom I owe many a kindness, cordially endorsed Miss Lozanich's suggestion. He had visited Canada and could not find words expressive enough of his admiration of the Dominion and its people. Although it was not in our original plan, Mrs. Pankhurst and I, after consultation with Miss Wickham, decided to go to Canada, where we spent three weeks, from February 27th to March 21st. We saw her in her beautiful snow-white dress, and even experienced some blizzards, but all the loneliness of her immense silent stretches was quite forgotten the moment we reached the stations, where the warm-hearted reception of the most cordial of peoples awaited us.

On a bright but bitter day we reached Montreal, where Mr. and Mrs. Harnaker and a group of ladies and gentlemen, friends and admirers of Mrs. Pankhurst, gave us a hearty welcome. Poor Mrs. Pankhurst shed tears of patriotic joy when she saw Canadians in khaki. Notwithstanding the severe cold and deep snow, the largest theatre was crammed with men and women, and when we appeared on the stage, which was decorated with British, Canadian and Serbian flags, the whole audience rose and cheered Mrs. Pankhurst to the echo. Whenever I, in my speech, mentioned "Serbia" or "the brave Serbian army," someone would call out "Three cheers for our brave Ally!" And then the people would give not three, but nine cheers for Serbia. It was one of the most enthusiastic meetings we ever had.

After the meeting Sir Thomas Tate took us in his motor-car to the Canadian Club to entertain us to supper, and as the Hôtel Ritz, at which we were staying, was not more than five hundred yards distant, I walked in my evening shoes through the deep snow to the hotel.

Next day I lunched at the Canadian Women's Club, and spoke on the Serbian women, but immediately afterwards I felt so ill that I called in a doctor, who seemed alarmed at my high temperature. I asked him to tell Mrs. Pankhurst (who had just returned from a tea-party in her honour) that I could not leave with her that evening for Quebec, where we were to address a large meeting on the morrow. Presently the doctor returned, followed by Mrs. Pankhurst, carrying in her hand a small sheet of brown paper.

"I am sorry to hear you have got such a bad chill that it is impossible for you to come with me to Quebec," she said to me. "I am sorry also for the people, as it has been widely advertised that you were to speak to them on Serbia. Rest a day or two and recover quickly. I have brought a mustard leaf to ease your pain."

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Pankhurst," I exclaimed, "why do you destroy my idealisation of you? What on earth has the leader of the British suffragettes to do with a mustard leaf?"

"All men are silly, and you are no exception," she retorted, laughing. "Do you think that because I am a suffragette I have not the nursing instinct of a woman? We were born to nurse even foolish men."

What a wonderful woman she was! She addressed two meetings that day, speaking only of the sufferings of the Serbian refugees; travelled that night by rail to Quebec; next day spoke there at a great meeting; travelled by night back to Montreal, and continued her journey to Ottawa to organise another meeting in that town. To travel thirty-six hours by rail without interruption was nothing to her.

When I was leaving Montreal for Ottawa I was informed that his Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught expected me to lunch that day at the Vida Hall, but if I did not reach Ottawa in time for luncheon, then I was to go to see him at six o'clock that evening. I arrived late, and was received by a group of sympathetic ladies and gentlemen, headed by Mr. Johnson and charming Mrs. Olive Garratt and Miss Taylor (whom I found afterwards to be an exquisite poet), who took me to the Château Laurier. I drove out in a sleigh, the streets being covered with deep snow, and paid a *visite de courtésie* to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Borden, the Premier, who immediately returned my visit. I learned also that the Duke and Duchess of Connaught had graciously granted their patronage to the meeting at which I was to speak on Serbia and the Serbs.

At six o'clock punctually I reached Vida Hall and was immediately taken to his Royal Highness. The Duke (who had known me for several years in London) received me with his own peculiar blend of Royal graciousness and democratic cordiality, quite his own speciality. The Duke asked for my latest news from King Peter and the Serbian Government at Corfu, and wished to know my impressions of the operations in the Balkans. In answer to my grave fear that our Allies might abandon these operations, which, in my opinion, were absolutely necessary, the Duke said that whatever danger there might have been of that was past, and that Salonica would become an indispensable base. He had always considered the Balkan operations of the Allies of the greatest importance to the general situation, and he was glad to be able to reassure me concerning the immediate prospects. He spoke with pride of Canada's

magnificent response to the call of the Mother Country, and noted with pleasure that many Serbs and Montenegrins had joined the Canadian contingent. Then the Duke took me to task:

"I have known you from of old as a diplomatist full of consideration for all interests and for everybody. I was, therefore, surprised to read in some London papers, and recently in the American papers, letters and interviews in which I thought you did not do full justice to Italy. It is not only most essential to the common cause to have the co-operation of Italy, but it seems to me that you Serbs have special reason for winning her confidence and friendship, both because of your temporary interests during the present war and because of your permanent interests. Italy's friendship is worth winning, even if you have to make some sacrifices."

I felt honoured that the Duke had so frankly criticised me, and explained to him that in some American papers my views on Italy's Adriatic and Balkan policy had not been correctly reproduced. I assured his Royal Highness that responsible Serbian statesmen, with Mr. Pashich at their head, were quite alive to the necessity of securing Italy's friendship and confidence, even at the cost of certain sacrifices.

Before leaving I asked his Royal Highness to accept a copy of my book on Serbia and the Serbians, in which I had declared the Serbians to be the Irish of South-Eastern Europe, and he bade me bring the book next day when I came to lunch with him and the Duchess. At the luncheon at Government House I had the honour to sit on the right hand of the Duchess, who confessed how much she admired the brave Serbian army, and how sorry she was for the Serbian women and children who

had suffered so cruelly in their flight through Albania. I thanked her for her great interest in the Serbian Relief Committees of Canada, and she assured me that the Canadians had very sincere sympathy with the Serbs. She told me she had read, some years ago, my book, "A Royal Tragedy," and was much impressed by it. She remembered the prophecies of Matha of Kremna and wanted me to tell her more about them. She recalled King Milan as a very brilliant man. She and the Duke had once spent a few days with King Alphonso of Spain and King Milan of Serbia, and it was a real joy to see the sparkling *esprit* of these two young Sovereigns each trying to outshine the other.

I had the honour of talking with the Duke on the evening of March 2nd, 1916, and of lunching with the Duke and Duchess on March 3rd. On March 4th, at noon, I was informed by telephone from Vida Hall that his Royal Highness wished me to come that afternoon at four o'clock. When I arrived I found a tea- and skating-party on the lake near Government House. The Duke came from the ice, with his skates on, and said to me: "I thought you might like a little skating or take a cup of tea while watching others skate."

"I thank your Royal Highness very much," I said, "but, as you know, I have been for many years skating on the slippery ice of diplomacy, and have had quite enough of skating." The Duke introduced me to two ladies, and told them what I had just said about the slippery ice of diplomacy and then returned to pursue his recreation.

There were many ladies and gentlemen, all very fine skaters. But I thought none skated with greater vigour than the Duke himself, especially since he had for his

partner a charming and pretty schoolgirl (as she seemed to me). When he returned to the kiosk for a cup of tea I congratulated him on his vigour and youthfulness, and told him how I admired his dance on the ice with that young schoolgirl.

"Schoolgirl! You call her a schoolgirl?" exclaimed the Duke. "Why, she is a married woman with three children!" And, laughing, he called the lady to tell her what I had said.

Ottawa Society was full of the warmest sympathy for Serbia. Mrs. Pankhurst's friends engaged the Russell Theatre for our meeting, and, no doubt, owing to the patronage of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the *élite* of the city honoured us with their presence. It was a delightful sight to see the boxes, stalls and galleries occupied by elegant people in evening dress. Our Ottawa gathering could compare favourably even with our Washington meeting at the Belasco Theatre, where the society of Washington and the diplomats of the Entente Powers honoured Serbia and us by their presence. Such difference as existed could be explained by the fact that the Washington meeting took place in the afternoon, while the Ottawa meeting was held in the evening, when most of the ladies and gentlemen appeared in evening dress. My own speech, on the merits and aspirations of the Serbian nation, was often interrupted by warm applause, but Mrs. Pankhurst, who always spoke after me, aroused tremendous enthusiasm. Not only our themes, but also our sympathetic audience inspired us to do our best, and Mrs. Pankhurst, always very eloquent, was on that evening superb. Mr. C. A. Magrath, a member of the International Joint Commission, took the chair and delivered an eloquent speech on Canada's sympathy

with, and admiration for, the Serbian nation and army. A handsome young Canadian opened the proceedings by singing beautifully the Serbian National Anthem, "O God of Justice." I shall never forget that meeting and the delightful time I had in Ottawa.

My Ottawa friends insisted that I should address another meeting before I left, and engaged for that purpose the Forum Theatre. Just before the proceedings the organising spirit of our meetings in Ottawa introduced me to some French ladies, for whose sake I afterwards spoke of the influence which the French genius had exercised on the Serbians of the Middle Ages, and how in the veins of our best Kings (including the great Tsar Dushan) ran many a drop of French blood. I spoke also on the tolerance of our people and how well we treated the Jews, who had repaid our liberality by fighting and dying for Serbian ideals like true patriots. A group of Jews and Jewesses shook hands with me at the end, and thanked me for what I had said about their Serbian fellows.

In beautiful Toronto I spent seven very agreeable days, and made many interesting and charming acquaintances. Major Deacon, the President of the Canadian Club, Lieutenant-Colonel Noel G. L. Marshall, of the Canadian Red Cross, Professor Mavor, of Toronto University, and Mrs. Hamilton, President of the Serbian Relief Committee, did everything to make my stay pleasant. On my arrival I was the guest of the Canadian Club, and before some four hundred members—lawyers, professors, bankers, merchants, clergymen, officers and political men—I spoke of the Serbs' services to European civilisation and of their democratic principles, poetry and political aspirations. When I had finished everyone rose

and gave three cheers for Serbia, the Serbian army, and the Serbian people.

But our most wonderful meeting in Toronto was at the Mansey Great Hall, where, I was assured, four thousand persons were present, all most enthusiastically disposed towards Serbia and the Serbs. Professor Mavor obtained an invitation for me from Toronto University to deliver a lecture or series of lectures on Serbian History to their students one day in the beginning of April. I accepted the invitation, but increasing illness prevented me from availing myself of the privilege. Professor James Mavor knew Russia better than any other foreigner, and had written two classical books on its economic development. Russia and, indeed, all Slavs owe a great debt of gratitude to him.

I was pleasantly surprised to find in Toronto a prosperous and happy Serb colony. A kind Methodist minister had placed his large schoolroom at their disposal, and they arranged a special Serb meeting to be addressed by me. Like true tolerant Serbs, they had even invited to their meeting some Bulgars who lived in Toronto. I was delighted to address so many men and women from my own country—intelligent, patriotic, and loving Canada. At the close of my address the Bulgars shook hands with me and expressed their regret that their country was fighting Serbia. Some Russians, Poles and Czechs were also present.

While in Toronto, which struck me as the most beautiful city in Canada, I was asked to address meetings in Hamilton and Brampton. In Hamilton the Mayor took the chair, and in Brampton my hosts were Dr. Albert Sharpe and his charming wife. Dr. Sharpe accompanied Admiral Troubridge with the British naval guns to

Belgrade. The meeting was held in a Methodist chapel. Dr. Sharpe took me to the famous Brampton hot-houses, which supply all sorts of fresh flowers for the whole of Canada. It was a rare joy to see thousands and thousands of roses, carnations, violets, lilies-of-the-valley, wall-flowers, narcissi, hyacinths and orchids. It was a fascinating riot of colour and scent.

We travelled for eight hours from Toronto to North Bay by rail, through snow-covered fields beautifully lighted by the sunshine. Both Mrs. Pankhurst and I addressed a large meeting in the Congregational Church, and afterwards attended a reception in our honour. My host and hostess were Mr. and Mrs. MacDougall. He is a popular teacher in the Normal School for Teachers in North Bay, and from him I learnt much about the importance which Canada attaches to the education of her rising generation. In the scholastic atmosphere of North Bay I found that Canada, with real enthusiasm, emulated the love which the people of the United States cherish for education.

We had to travel uninterruptedly for thirty-six hours by rail through a very wintry country, very sparsely populated, but getting more and more interesting after we passed Port Arthur, on Lake Superior, and Fort William. Late at night we reached Winnipeg, where we were received with true Canadian cordiality by a group of Mrs. Pankhurst's friends, headed by Dr. Mary E. Crawford and Mr. Smith. Next day I had the honour to address them on Serbia, and at the same time Mrs. Pankhurst was addressing the Canadian Ladies' Club. In the evening we spoke to a large gathering in the Congregational Church. The Governor of the province, Sir Douglas Cameron, and the military commander,

Count de Bury, honoured the meeting with their presence, and Mr. Dixon, a member of the provincial Parliament, presided.

I felt deeply thankful to God that my country was so fully appreciated and admired by Canada. I need hardly add that Winnipeg people were as sympathetic as the warm-hearted people of Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. Winnipeg gave me the impression of being destined to become one day, sooner or later, the capital of Canada. The city is already preparing for its great future, and everything in it is undertaken on a large scale. Nowhere else have I seen such long avenues and roads, stretching for miles and miles.

It was in Winnipeg that I, for the first time in my life (I was then in my seventy-fourth year!), felt sorry that I was not a rich man. In that town I found only a single Serbian family, amongst great numbers of Russians and Poles. And this sole Serbian family had only one child, a little girl just reaching her tenth year. But this pretty child was already a marvellous pianist. There was something almost uncanny in her technical skill. She was playing to me in the drawing-room of the Royal Alexandra Hotel when the Governor, Sir Douglas Cameron, and Count de Bury called to return my visit. They listened while she played a Tarantella, and shared my admiration for the child who, no doubt, if God grants her life, will one day be a famous artiste, doing honour to her native country and to Canada. I wished I could adopt that child and let her, in London and Paris, develop her unusual musical gift. I parted from Lulu Putnik and her parents with sincere regret that I was not a rich man.

Now let me sum up my impressions of Canada. She

is already a great country, destined to be still greater. Her natural resources are immense, hardly as yet even tapped. She is proud that she is the daughter of Great Britain and a member of the British Empire. I found every Canadian rejoice in that pride. They are proud, too, that they are fighting for a great cause, and happy to have had an opportunity of showing their deep attachment to the Homeland. They are cheerful and hopeful, brave and patriotic. They love their country, but they also have love to spare for their great Allies, France, Russia and Italy, and their small but suffering Allies, Belgium, Serbia and Rumania.

As I left Canada I thanked God that such an earnest and generous country was the ally of my native land, and I carried away from the Dominion everlasting admiration and love for its people.

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